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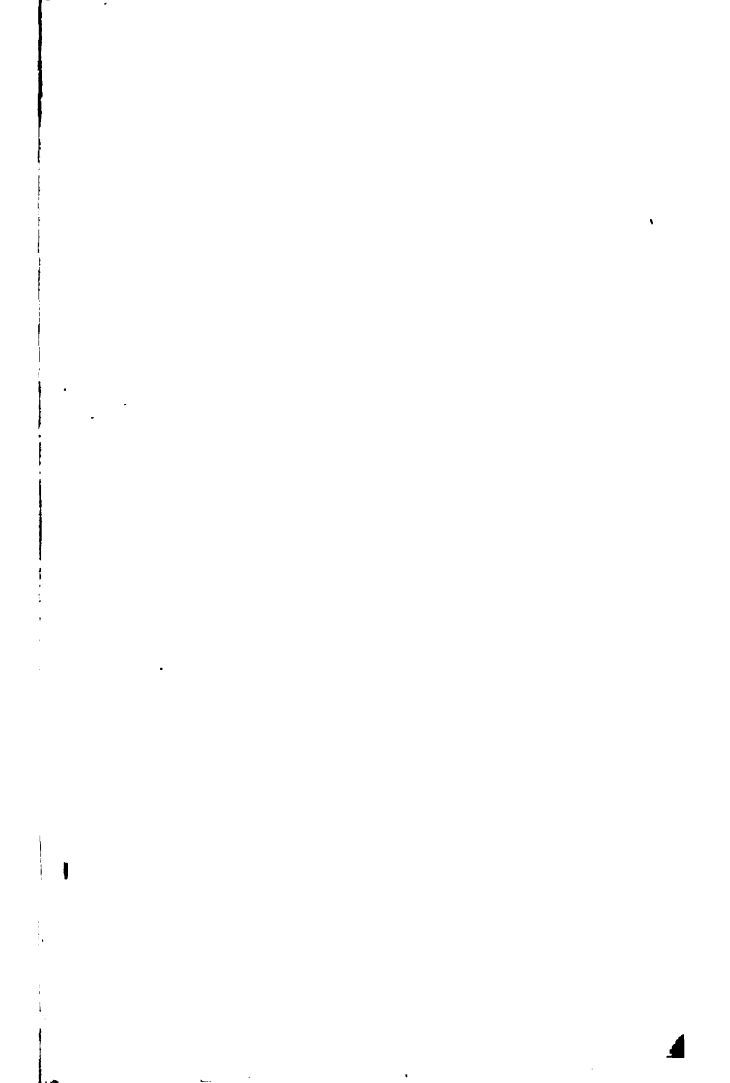
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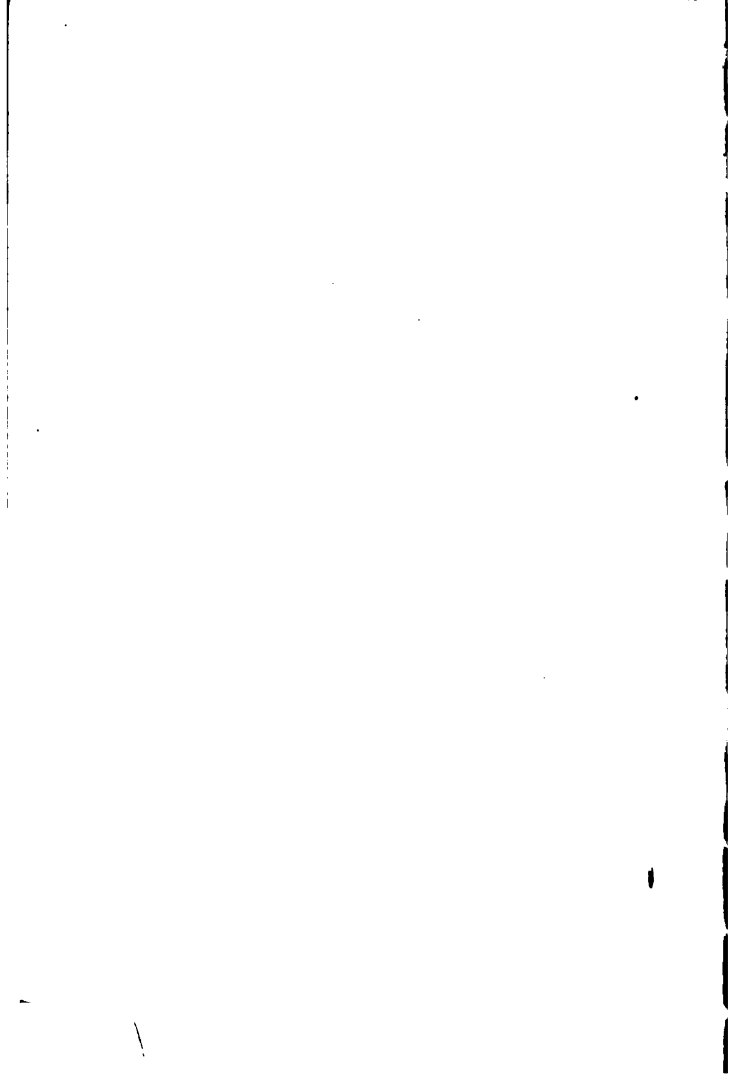
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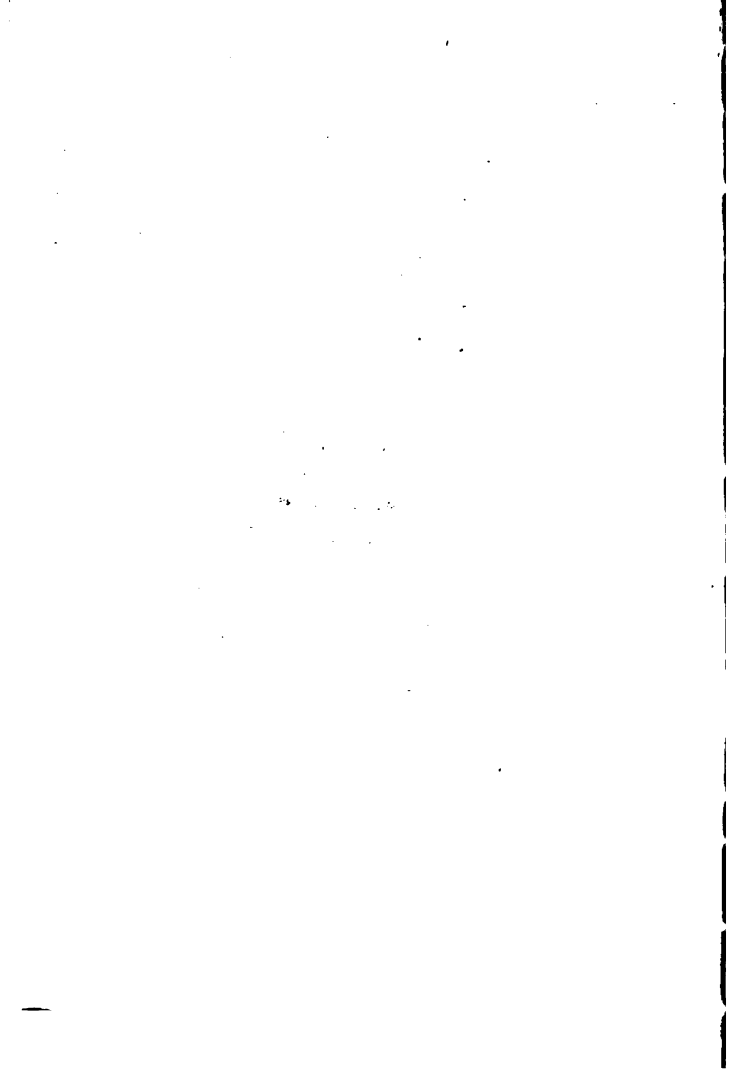
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Volume VI

Men of Affairs

JOHN JACOB ASTOR

PETER COOPER

AMOS LAWRENCE

ANDREW CARNEGIE

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

JOHN BIGELOW

Players

ADELAIDE RISTORI

CLARA MORRIS

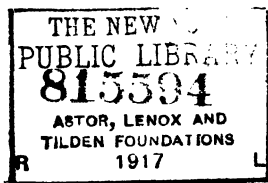
RICHARD MANSFIELD



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1916

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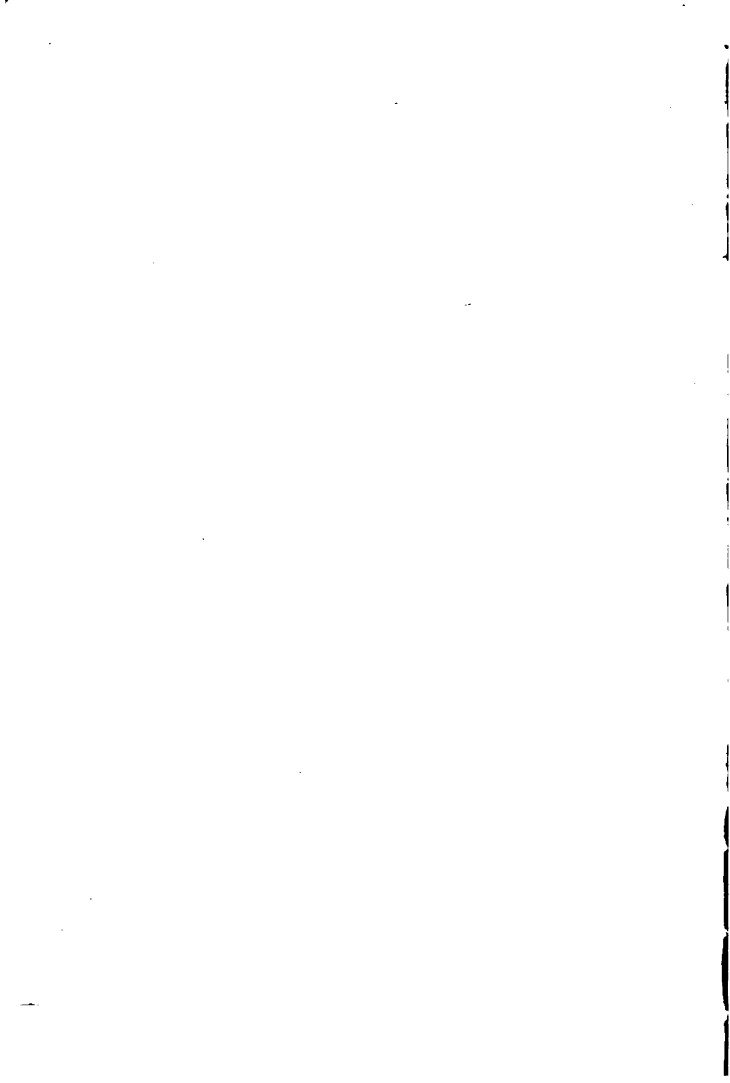


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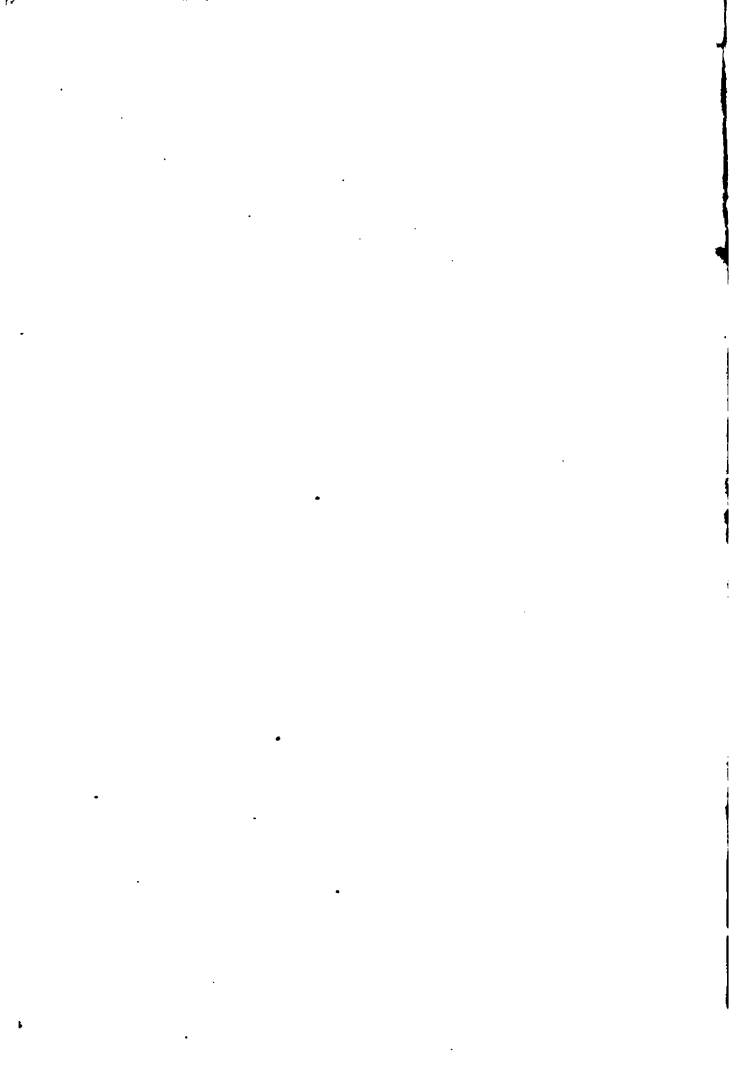
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VOLUME VI
MEN OF AFFAIRS

JOHN JACOB ASTOR
(1763-1848)



JOHN JACOB ASTOR

THE SON OF A GERMAN BUTCHER

IT IS a mooted question whether shrewdness and industry alone—Mr. Astor's strong points—could to-day carry a man as far as they carried him. But all will agree that these qualities for man excellent foundation on which the superstructure of a gracious, useful life may rest in comfortable security.

*John Jacob Astor was born in the village of Waldorf, near Heidelberg, in the Grand Duchy of Baden, on the 17th of July, 1763. . . . Here John Jacob grew up to boyhood. His brothers left home to earn their livelihood elsewhere, as soon as they were old enough to do so, and he alone remained under the parental roof. His father destined him for his own calling (that of a butcher), but the boy shrank from it with disgust. To crown his misfortunes, his mother died, and his father married again, and this time a woman who looked with no favor

*From "Great Fortunes," by James D. McCabe, Jr. George Maclean, 1870.

upon the son. The newly married pair quarrelled continually and the boy was glad to escape occasionally to the house of a schoolmate, where he passed the night in a garret or out-house. By daylight he was back at his father's slaughter house, to assist in carrying out the meat. He was poorly clad and badly fed, and his father's bad reputation wounded him so keenly that he shrank from playing with other boys, and led a life of comparative isolation.

To the German peasant two courses only lie open: to learn a trade or go out to service. John Jacob was resolved not to do the latter, and he was in no condition to do the former. He was already familiar with his father's trade, but he shrank from it with disgust, and he could not hope to obtain money enough to pay for his tuition as an apprentice in any other calling. No workman in the village would receive him as an apprentice for less than fifty dollars, and fifty dollars were then further beyond his reach than as many millions in after years. The harvest was approaching, and Jacob Astor, seeing an unusual amount of work in store for him at that season, decided the matter for his son by informing him that he must prepare to settle down as his assistant. He obeyed, but discontentedly, and with a determination to abandon his home at the earliest practicable moment.

His chief desire was to leave Germany and emigrate to America. The American Revolution had brought the "New Land" into great prominence; and one of the brothers, Henry Astor, had already settled in New York as a butcher, and his letters had the effect of increasing John Jacob's desire to follow him. It was impossible to do so then, for the war which was ranging in this country made it anything but inviting to an emigrant, and the boy was entirely ignorant of the English language. Nevertheless, he knew that the war could not last always, and he resolved to go as soon as peace would allow him. Meanwhile he wished to join his elder brother, who had removed to London, and was now engaged with his uncle in the manufacture of musical instruments. In London he thought he could acquire a knowledge of English, and save from his wages the amount necessary to pay his passage from England to America. He could reach some of the seaports of the continent by walking. But he needed money to pay his passage from there to Great Britain. His determination thus formed, he made no secret of it, and succeeded at length in extorting a reluctant consent from his father, who was not inclined to expect very much from the future career of his son. His teacher, however, had more faith in him, and said to the butcher, on the morning of the

lad's departure: "I am not afraid of John Jacob; he'll get through the world. He has a clear head, and everything right behind his ears."

He was seventeen years old when he left home; was stout and well-built, and had a constitution of iron. He was possessed of a good plain education, and a remarkable degree of common sense. He had no vicious habits or propensities, and was resolved that he would never set foot again in his native town until he could do so as a rich man. . . .

With his scanty wardrobe in a bundle, which he slung over his shoulder by a stick, and a mere pittance in his purse, he set out from Waldorf, on foot, for the Rhine. "Soon after I left the village," said he, in after-life, "I sat down beneath a tree to rest, and there I made three resolutions: to be honest, to be industrious, and not to gamble." He had but two dollars in his pocket; but this was enough for his purpose. The Rhine was not far distant from his native village, and this part of his journey he easily accomplished on foot. Upon reaching the river he is said to have secured a place as oarsman on a timber raft. . . .

Upon reaching the Dutch seaport at the mouth of the Rhine, young Astor received his wages—about ten dollars—the largest sum he had ever possessed, and took passage in a

vessel for London, where he was welcomed cordially by his brother, and provided with employment in his manufactory.

He was now set to work to prepare himself for his emigration to America. His industry was unflagging. He worked literally from dawn till dark, and practised the most rigid economy in his expenditures. His leisure time, which was brief, was spent in trying to master the English language, and in acquiring information respecting America. He had anticipated great difficulty in his efforts to learn English, but succeeded beyond his hopes. In six weeks he could make himself understood in that language, and some time before starting for America could speak it with ease, though he never could at any period of his life rid himself of his strong German accent. He was never able to write English correctly, but after being some years in this country acquired a style which was striking and to the point, in spite of its inaccuracy. . . .

In September, 1783, the news of the peace which established the independence of the United States was published in Europe. Young Astor had now been in London two years, and had saved money enough to take him to America. He was the possessor of a suit of good clothes, besides his ordinary wearing apparel, and fifteen guineas in English money, which

he had saved from his slender earnings by the absolute denial to himself of everything not essential to his existence. The way to America was now open, and he resolved to set out at once. For five guineas he bought a steerage passage in a ship bound for Baltimore, and reserving about five pounds sterling of the remainder of his capital in money, invested the rest in seven German flutes, which he bought of his brother, and embarked for the "New Land". . . .

Although the ship sailed in November it did not reach the Chesapeake until near the end of January, and there, when only one day distant from Baltimore, was caught in the ice, where it was compelled to remain until late in March. This delay was very vexatious to the young emigrant, but it proved in the end the greatest blessing that could have befallen him. During the voyage Astor made the acquaintance of one of his fellow-passengers, a German, somewhat older than himself, and, while the ship lay fast in the ice, the two were constantly together. As a consequence of the intimacy which thus sprung up between them, they exchanged confidences, told each other their history, and their purpose in coming to America. Astor learned that his friend had emigrated to the New World a few years before, friendless and penniless, but that, begin-

ning in a little way, he had managed to become a fur-trader. He bought his furs from the Indians, and from the boatmen plying on the Hudson River. These he sold at a small profit to larger dealers, until he had accumulated a considerable sum for one in his position. Believing that he could find a better market in Europe than in America, he had embarked all his capital in skins, which he had taken to England and sold at a heavy advance. The proceeds he had invested in toys and trinkets valued by the savages, and was now on his way back with them, intending to go into the wilderness himself and purchase an additional stock of furs from the Indians. He recommended Astor to enter upon the same business; gave him valuable information as to the value of peltries in America and in England; told him the best way of buying, packing, preserving, and shipping the skins, and gave him the names of the leading furriers in New York, Montreal, and London. Astor was deeply impressed with the views of his friend, but he could not see his own way clear to such a success, as he had no capital. His friend assured him that capital was unnecessary if he was willing to begin in an humble way. He could buy valuable furs on the wharves of New York for toys and trinkets, and even for cakes, from the Indians who visited the city, and these he could sell

at an advance to the New York dealers. He advised the young man, however, not to be satisfied with the American market, but to work for a position which would enable him to send his furs to England, where they would bring four or five times as much as in this country. Astor carefully treasured up all that his friend said to him, and quietly resolved that he would lose no time in entering upon this business, which seemed to promise so much.

The two friends travelled together from Baltimore to New York, where they were warmly received by Astor's brother, Henry, who had succeeded in laying the foundation of a prosperous business as a butcher, in which he afterward made a large fortune. Both brothers were men of business habits, and on the very first evening after the arrival of the newcomer they began to discuss plans for his future. Astor's friend stated all the advantages of the fur trade, and convinced Henry Astor that it was a fine field for the energies of his brother; and it was agreed that it would be best for the young man to seek employment in the service of some furrier in the city, in order that he might thoroughly learn the business, and familiarize himself with the country and its customs. To his great delight, young Astor learned that, so far from being compelled to pay his employer

for teaching him the business, as in Europe, he would be certain here to receive his board and nominal wages from the first. The next day the three started out, and succeeded in obtaining a situation for the young man in the store of Mr. Robert Bowne, a Quaker, and a merchant of long experience in the business, as well as a most estimable man. He is said to have engaged Astor at two dollars per week and his board.

Astor was at once set to work by his employer to beat furs, this method of treating them being required to prevent the moths from lodging in and destroying them. From the first he applied himself to the task of learning the business. He bent all the powers of his remarkable mind to acquiring an intimate knowledge of furs, and of fur-bearing animals, and their haunts and habits. His opportunities for doing so were very good, as many of the skins were sold over Bowne's counters by the hunters who had taken them. These men he questioned with a minuteness that astonished them, and the result was that in a few years he was as thoroughly familiar with the animals, their habits, their country, and the mode of taking them, as many of the trappers themselves. He is said to have been in his prime the best judge of furs in America. He appreciated the fact that no man can succeed in any business or

profession without fully understanding it, and he was too much determined upon success to be satisfied with a superficial knowledge. . . .

Astor's employer was not insensible to his merits, and soon promoted him to a better place. In a little while the latter entrusted him with the buying of the furs from the men who brought them to the store, and he gave such satisfaction to his employer that he was rewarded with a still more confidential post. Montreal was at that time the chief fur depot of the country, and it was a custom of Mr. Bowne to make an annual journey to that city for the purpose of replenishing his stock. The journey was long and fatiguing, and as soon as the old gentleman found that he could entrust the mission to his clerk, he sent him in his place. Ascending the Hudson to Albany, Astor, with a pack on his back, struck out across the country, which was then almost unsettled, to Lake George, up which he passed into Lake Champlain. Sailing to the head of the lake, he made his way to Montreal. Then returning in the same way, he employed Indians to transport his furs from Lake George to Albany, and dropped down the Hudson in the way he had come. Mr. Bowne was delighted with the success of his clerk, who proved more than a match for the shrewd Indians in his bargains. It was doubtless here that Mr. Astor obtained that

facility in "driving a hard bargain" for which he was afterward noted.

As soon as Mr. Astor felt himself master of his business, he left the employ of Mr. Bowne, and began life on his own account. The field upon which he purposed entering was extensive, but it was one of which he had made a careful survey. . . .

It was into a field already occupied by powerful and hostile corporations that the young German entered. He was perfectly aware of the opposition his efforts would encounter from them, but he was not dismayed. He began business in 1786, in a small store in Water Street, which he furnished with a few toys and notions suited to the tastes of the Indians who had skins to sell. His entire capital consisted of only a few hundred dollars, a portion of which was loaned him by his brother. He had no assistants. He did all his own work. He bought his skins, cured, beat, and sold them himself.

Several times during the year he made journeys on foot through western New York, buying skins from the settlers, farmers, trappers, savages, wherever he could find them. He tramped over nearly the entire State in this way, and is said to have had a better knowledge of its geography and topography than any man living.

“He used to boast, late in life, when the Erie Canal had called into being a line of thriving towns through the centre of the State, that he had himself, in his numberless tramps, designated the sites of those towns, and predicted that one day they would be the centres of business and population. Particularly he noted the spots where Rochester and Buffalo now stand, one having a harbor on Lake Erie and the other upon Lake Ontario. He predicted that those places would one day be large and prosperous cities; and that prediction he made when there was scarcely a settlement at Buffalo, and only wigwams on the site of Rochester.”

During these tramps his business in the city was managed by a partner, with whom he was fully compelled to associate himself.

As soon as he had collected a certain number of bales of skins he shipped them to London, and took a steerage passage in the vessel which conveyed them. He sold his skins in that city at a fine profit, and succeeded in forming business connections which enabled him afterward to ship his goods direct to London, and draw regularly upon the houses to which they were consigned. He also made an arrangement with the house of Astor & Broadwood, in which his brother was a partner, by which he became the agent in New York for the sale of their musical instruments, a branch of his business

which became quite profitable to him. He is said to have been the first man in New York who kept a regular stock of musical instruments on hand.

Slowly, and by unremitting industry, Mr. Astor succeeded in building up a certain business. His personal journeys made him acquainted with the trappers, and enabled him to win their good will. The savages sold their skins to him readily, and he found a steady market and a growing demand for his commodities in the Old World.

It was about this time that he married Miss Sarah Todd, of New York. She was a connection of the Brevoort family, and was of better social position than her husband. She entered heartily into his business, doing much of the buying and beating of the furs herself. She was a true helpmate to him, and long after he was a millionaire, he used to boast of her skill in judging furs and conducting business operations.

In 1794 Jay's treaty placed the frontier forts in the hands of the Americans, and thus increased the opportunities of our own traders to extend their business. It was of the greatest service to Mr. Astor. It enabled him to enlarge the field of his operations, and, at the same time, to send his agents on the long journeys which he formerly made, while he

himself remained in New York to direct his business, which by this time had grown to considerable proportions.

He was now on the road to wealth. He had scores of trappers and hunters working for him in the great wilderness, and his agents were kept busy buying and shipping the skins to New York. As soon as he was able to do so he purchased a ship, in which he sent his furs to London, occasionally making a voyage thither himself. He manifested the greatest interest in the markets of the Old World, especially in those of Asia, and informed himself so accurately concerning them that he was always enabled to furnish his captains with instructions covering the most minute detail of their transactions in those markets; and it is said that he was never unsuccessful in his ventures there, except when his instructions were disobeyed.

In this again, as in the fur trade, we see him patiently acquiring knowledge of the eastern trade before entering to engage in it. His first step was always to fully comprehend his task, to examine it from every possible point of view, so that he should be prepared to encounter any sudden reverse, or ready to take advantage of good fortune. Here lay the secret of his success—that he never embarked in an enterprise until he had learned how to use it to advantage.

Under his skilful management his business grew rapidly; but he avoided speculation, and confined himself to legitimate commerce. He was plain and simple in his habits, carrying this trait to an extreme long after economy had ceased to be necessary to him. He worked hard, indulged in no pleasures except horse-back exercise and the theatre, of both of which he was very fond. It was only after he had amassed a large fortune that he ever left his business before the close of the day. Then he would leave his counting-room at two in the afternoon, and, partaking of an early dinner, would pass the rest of the day in riding about the island. . . .

All this time Mr. Astor had lived over his store, but in 1800, after he had been in business fifteen years, he moved his dwelling to 223 Broadway, on the site of the Astor House of to-day. He lived here, with one removal, for upward of twenty-five years. The house was plain and simple, but he was satisfied with it. He was now worth a quarter of a million dollars, and his business was growing rapidly. The fur trade was exceedingly profitable. A beaver skin could be bought from the trappers in western New York for one dollar and sold in London for six dollars and a quarter. By investing this amount in English manufactures, the six dollars and a quarter received for the skin

could be made to produce ten dollars paid for the English goods in New York.

The Chinese trade was also very profitable. China was an excellent market for furs. They brought high prices, and the proceeds could always be invested in teas and silks, which sold well in New York. His profit on a voyage would sometimes reach seventy thousand dollars, and the average gain on a lucky venture of this kind was thirty thousand dollars. The high prices produced by the war of 1812-15 were also in Mr. Astor's favor. His ships were all remarkably lucky in escaping capture by the enemy, and he was almost the only merchant who had a cargo of tea in the market. Tea having reached double its usual price, he was enabled to reap immense profits from his ventures.

It is estimated that Mr. Astor made about two millions of dollars by his trade in furs and teas. The bulk of his immense fortune was made by investments in real estate. His estate was estimated at twenty millions of dollars at the time of his death. . . . He had a firm faith in the magnificent future of New York as the greatest city of the continent, and as fast as his gains from his business came in, they were regularly invested in real estate. A part was expended in leasing for a long period property which the owners would not sell, and the

rest in buying property in fee simple. These leases, some of which have but recently expired, were extremely profitable. In his purchases of land Mr. Astor was very fortunate. He pursued a regular system in making them. Whenever a favorable purchase could be made in the heart of the city, he availed himself of the opportunity, but as a rule he bought his lands in what was then the suburb of the city, and which few besides himself expected to see built up during their lifetime. His sagacity and foresight have been more justified by the course of events. When Mr. Astor bought Richmond Hill, the estate of Aaron Burr, he gave one thousand dollars an acre for the hundred and sixty acres. Twelve years later the land was valued at fifteen hundred dollars per lot. . . .

The most important of all Mr. Astor's undertakings was his effort at founding the settlement of Astoria, on the coast of Oregon. This enterprise has been made so familiar to the majority of readers by the pen of Washington Irving, that I can only refer to it here. "His design," says a writer of thirteen years ago, "was to organize and control the fur trade from the Lakes to the Pacific, by establishing trading posts along the Missouri and Columbia to its mouth. He designed establishing a central depot and post at the mouth of the Colum-

bia. He proposed sending regular supply ships to the Pacific posts around the Horn. By these, stores were to be sent also to the Russian establishments. It was part of his plan, if possible, to obtain possession of one of the Sandwich Islands as a station, for from the Pacific coast he knew that the Chinese market for his peltries could be most conveniently reached, and thus the necessity for a long and circuitous voyage be avoided. Instead of bringing the furs intended for China to New York, they could be sent from the Pacific. By the supply ships, too, the stock of goods suitable for the Indian trade would be kept up there, and the cargoes purchased with the proceeds of the furs sold in China brought back to New York. The line of posts across the continent would become a line of towns; emigration would follow, and civilization would belt the continent.

In this grand scheme Mr. Astor was only anticipating the course of events. When he laid his plans before the Government, Mr. Jefferson, who was then President, "considered as a great acquisition," as he afterward expressed himself in a letter to Mr. Astor, "the commencement of a settlement on the western coast of America, and looked forward with gratification to the time when its descendants should have spread themselves through the whole length

of that coast, covering it with free and independent Americans, unconnected with us except by ties of blood and interest, and enjoying, like us, the rights of self-government." Even Jefferson's mind, wide as it was, could not take in the idea of a national unity embracing both ends of the continent; but not so thought Astor. The merchant saw farther than the statesman. It was precisely this political unity which gave him hope and chance of success in his world-wide schemes. When the Constitution was adopted, the chief source of apprehension for its permanence with men like Patrick Henry, and other wise statesmen, was the extent of our territory. The Alleghenies, it was thought, had put asunder communities whom no paper constitution could unite. But at that early day, when Ohio was the Far West, and no steamboat had yet gone up the Mississippi, Astor looked beyond the Ohio, beyond the Mississippi, and the Rocky Mountains, and saw the whole American territory, from ocean to ocean, the domain of one united nation, the seat of trade and industry. He saw lines of trading posts uniting the Western settlements with the Pacific; following this line of trading posts, he saw the columns of a peaceful emigration crossing the plains, crossing the mountains, descending the Columbia, and towns and villages taking the places of the

solitary posts, and cultivated fields instead of the hunting grounds of the Indian and the trapper. . . .

A company was formed, at the head of which stood Mr. Astor, and an elaborate and carefully arranged plan of operations prepared. Two expeditions were dispatched to the mouth of the Columbia, one by land and the other by sea. Many hardships were encountered, but the foundation of a settlement was successfully made on the Columbia. In spite of the war with England (1812-15), which now occurred, the enterprise would have been successful had Mr. Astor's positive instructions been obeyed. They were utterly disregarded, however, and his partners and agents not only betrayed him in every instance, but sold his property to a rival British company for a mere trifle. His pecuniary loss was over a million dollars, and his disappointment bitter beyond expression. When the enterprise was on the point of failure, and while he was still chafing at the conduct of his treacherous subordinates, he wrote to Mr. Hunt, the most faithful of all his agents: "Were I on the spot, and had the management of affairs, I would defy them all; but as it is, everything depends on you and your friends about you. Our enterprise is grand, and deserves success, and I hope in God it will meet it. *If my object was merely gain of money, I should say,*

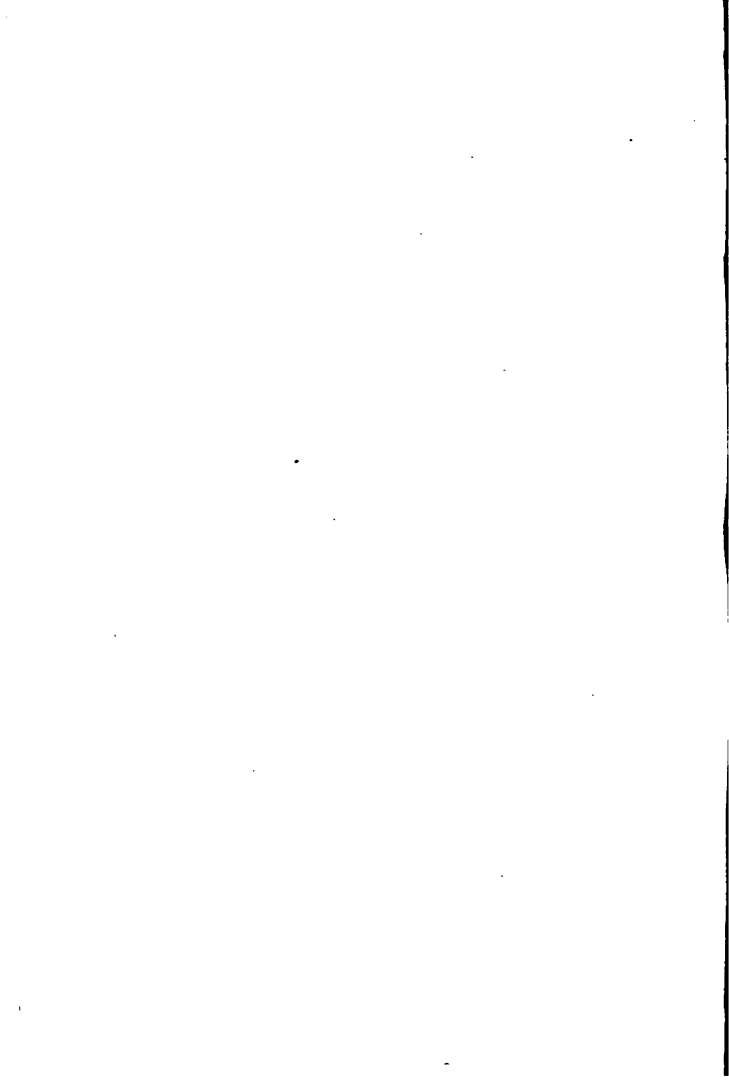
think whether it is best to save what we can, and abandon the place; but the very idea is like a dagger to my heart." When the news of the final betrayal reached him, he wrote to the same gentleman: "Had our place and property been fairly captured, I should have preferred it; I should not feel as if I were disgraced."

Mr. Astor remained in active business for fifty years. During that entire period he scarcely committed an error of judgment which led to a loss in business. He was thorough master of everything pertaining to his affairs, and his strength and accuracy of judgment were remarkable. The particulars of his transactions were indelibly impressed upon his mind. His intellect was vigorous and quick, and he grasped a subject with a readiness which seemed like intuition. He was always careful of the present, but he loved to undertake enterprises which extended far into the future. He was a man of the utmost punctuality in all his habits. He rose early, and, until he was fifty-five years old, was always in his office before seven o'clock. His capacity for work was very great, so that, in spite of his heavy labors, he was always able to leave his office by two o'clock, while many of his associates, who really did less than he, were compelled to remain in their counting-rooms until four or five. He was noted for his unvarying calmness, which he doubtless

owed to his German temperament. In the midst of disaster and loss he was cooler and more cheerful than ever. To those who chafed at their troubles, he would say, smilingly, "Keep quiet; keep cool." This was his safeguard.

His career has been related in these pages as an example to those who are seeking to rise in legitimate commerce. It is the best instance on record of the facility with which success may be won by patient and intelligent industry. In his capacity for grasping and carrying out an enterprise, in his prudent and economical management of his business, in his tact, courage, sagacity, Mr. Astor's example is one which will lead many to success and none to injury.

AMOS LAWRENCE
(1786-1852)



AMOS LAWRENCE

AN OLD-FASHIONED SUCCESS

THIS story of a successful business man who died sixty-four years ago no doubt sounds old-fashioned and priggish enough to modern readers. It would be a relief if we could know that the old gentleman had in his youth stolen apples or gone in swimming on Sunday. It is easy to sneer at "Old Square Toes," but a moment's reflection will convince us that sober industry and good judgment, enlivened by an occasional flash of imagination, are as valuable qualities to-day as ever they were.

* . . . Take this for your motto at the commencement of your journey, that the difference of going *just right*, or *a little wrong*, will be the difference of finding yourself in good quarters, or in a miserable bog or slough, at the end of it.

Of the whole number educated in the Groton stores for some years before and after myself, no one else, to my knowledge, escaped the bog

*An autobiographical fragment.

or slough; and my escape I trace to the simple fact of my having put a restraint upon my appetite. We five boys were in the habit, every forenoon, of making a drink compounded of rum, raisins, sugar, nutmeg, etc., with biscuit—all palatable to eat and drink. After being in the store four weeks, I found myself admonished by my appetite of the approach of the hour for indulgence. Thinking the habit might make trouble if allowed to grow stronger, without further apology to my seniors I declined partaking with them. My first resolution was to abstain for a week, and, when the week was out, for a month, and then for a year. Finally, I resolved to abstain for the rest of my apprenticeship, which was for five years longer. During that whole period I never drank a spoonful, though I mixed gallons daily for my old master and his customers. I decided not to be a slave to tobacco in any form, though I loved the odor of it then, and even now have in my drawer a superior Havana cigar, given me, not long since, by a friend, but only to smell of. I have never in my life smoked a cigar; never chewed but one quid, and that was before I was fifteen; and never took an ounce of snuff, though the scented rappee of forty years ago had great charms for me.

Now, I say, to this simple fact of starting *just right* am I indebted, with God's blessing

on my labors, for my present position, as well as that of the numerous connections sprung up around me. I have many details that now appear as plain to me as the sun at noonday, by which events are connected together, and which have led to results that call on me to bless the Lord for all his benefits, and to use the opportunities thus permitted to me in cheering on the generation of young men who have claims upon my sympathies as relations, fellow-townsmen, or brethren on a more enlarged scale.

My academy lessons, little academy balls, and eight-cent expenses for music and gingerbread, the agreeable partners in the hall, and pleasant companions in the stroll, all helped to make me feel that I had a character, even then; and, after leaving school and going into the store, there was not a month passed before I became impressed with the opinion that restraint upon appetite was necessary to prevent the slavery I saw destroying numbers around me. Many and many of the farmers, mechanics, and apprentices of that day have filled drunkards' graves, and have left destitute families and friends.

The knowledge of everyday affairs which I acquired in my business apprenticeship in Groton has been a source of pleasure and profit even in my last ten years' discipline.

When I first came to this city (Boston), I took lodgings in the family of a widow who had commenced keeping boarders for a living. I was one of her first, and perhaps had been in the city two months when I went to this place; and she, of course, while I remained, was inclined to adopt any rules for the boarders that I prescribed. The only one I ever made was, that, after supper, all the boarders who remained in the public room should remain quiet at least for one hour, to give those who chose to study or read an opportunity of doing so without disturbance. The consequence was that we had the most quiet and improving set of young men in the town. The few who did not wish to comply with the regulation went abroad after tea, sometimes to the theatre, sometimes to other places, but, to a man, became bankrupt in after life, not only in fortune, but in reputation; while a majority of the other class sustained good characters, and some are now living who are ornaments to society, and fill important stations. The influence of this small measure will perhaps be felt throughout generations. It was not less favorable on myself than on others.

I practised the maxim, "*Business before friends*," from the commencement of my course. During the first seven years of my business in this city I never allowed a bill against me to

stand unsettled over the Sabbath. If the purchase of goods was made at auction on Saturday, and delivered to me, I always examined and settled the bill by note or by crediting it, and having it clear, so that, in case I was not on duty on Monday, there would be no trouble for my boys; thus keeping the business *before* me, instead of allowing it to *drive* me.

My interest in home, and my desire to have something to tell my sisters to instruct and improve them, as well as to hear their comments upon whatever I communicated, was a powerful motive for me to spend a portion of each evening in my boarding-house, the first year I came to Boston, in reading and study.

I adopted the plan of keeping an accurate account of merchandise bought and sold each day, with the profit as far as practicable. This plan was pursued for a number of years; and I never found my merchandise fall short in taking an account of stock, which I did as often at least as once in each year. I was thus enabled to form an opinion of my actual state as a business man. I adopted also the rule always to have property, after my second year's business, to represent forty per cent. at least more than I owed; that is, never to be in debt more than two and a half times my capital. This caution saved me from ever getting embarrassed. If it were more generally adopted, we

should see fewer failures in business. Excessive credit is the rock on which so many business men are broken.

When I commenced, the embargo had just been laid, and with such restrictions on trade that many were induced to leave it. But I felt great confidence, that, by industry, economy, and integrity, I could get a living; and the experiment showed that I was right. Most of the young men who commenced at that period failed by spending too much money and using credit too freely.

I made about fifteen hundred dollars the first year, and more than four thousand the second. Probably, had I made four thousand the first year, I should have failed the second or third year. I practised a system of rigid economy, and never allowed myself to spend a fourpence for unnecessary objects until I had acquired it.

On the 1st of January, 1814, I took my brother Abbott into partnership on equal shares, putting fifty thousand dollars, that I had then earned; into the concern. Three days afterward, the "Bramble News" came, by which the excessive high price of goods was knocked down. Our stock was then large, and had cost a high price. He was in great anguish, considering himself a bankrupt for at least five thousand dollars. I cheered him by offering

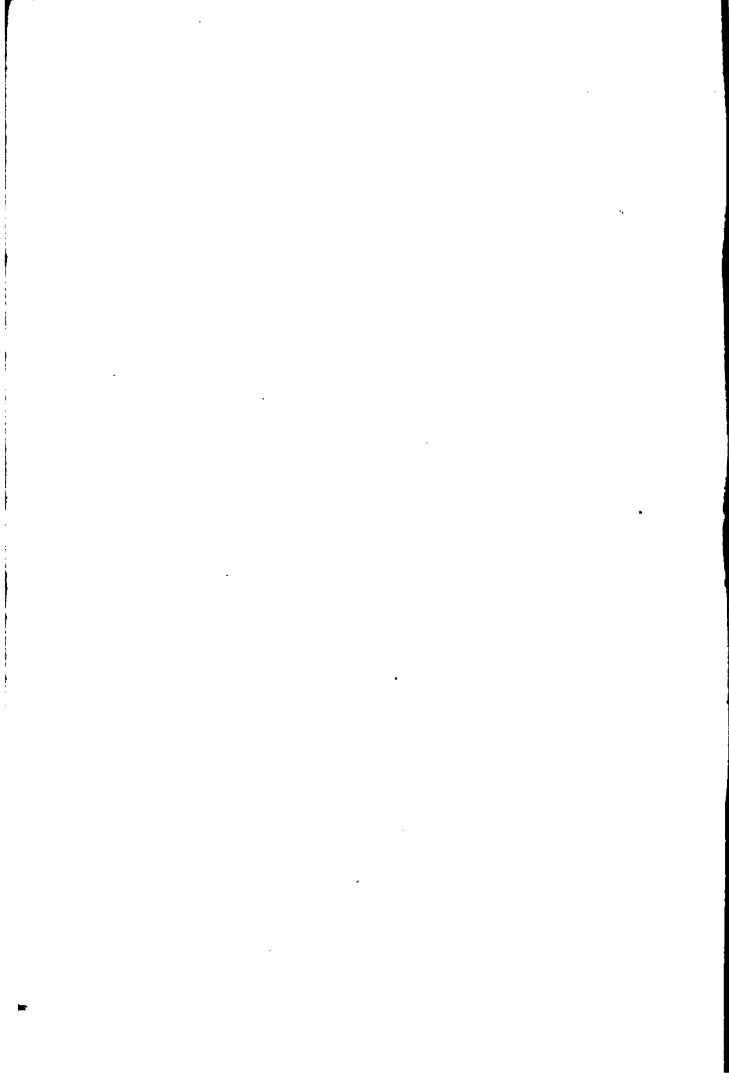
to cancel our co-partnership indentures, give him up his note, and, at the end of the year, pay him five thousand dollars. He declined the offer, saying I should lose that, and more besides, and, as he had enlisted, would do the best he could. This was in character, and it was well for us both. He was called off to do duty as a soldier through most of the year. I took care of the business, and prepared to retreat with my family into the country whenever the town seemed liable to fall into the hands of the British, who were very threatening in their demonstration. We still continue mercantile business under the first set of indentures, and under the same firm, merely adding "& Co.," as new partners have been admitted.

This day (December 17, 1837) completes thirty years since my commencing business, with the hope of acquiring no very definite amount of property, or having in my mind any anticipation of ever enjoying a tithe of that consideration my friends and the public are disposed to award me at this time. In looking back to that period, and reviewing the events as they come along, I can see the good hand of God in all my experience; and acknowledge, with deep humiliation, my want of gratitude and proper return for all his mercies. May each day I live impress me more deeply

with a sense of duty, and find me better prepared to answer His call, and account for my stewardship! The changes in our family have been perhaps no greater than usual in other families in that period, excepting in the matter of the eminent success that has attended our efforts of a worldly nature. This worldly success is the great cause of our danger in its uses and may prove a snare, unless we strive to keep constantly in mind that to whom much is given, of him will much be required.

I feel my own deficiencies, and lament them, but am encouraged and rewarded by the enjoyment, in a high degree, of all my well-meant efforts for the good of those around me. In short, I feel as though I can still do a little to advance the cause of human happiness while I remain here. My maxim is that I ought to "work while the day lasts; for the night of death will soon overtake me, when I can no more work." I continue to mend in strength, and feel at times the buoyancy of early days. It is now raining in torrents, keeping us all within doors. I have been at work with gimblet, saw, fore-plane, and hammer, thus securing a good share of exercise without leaving my chamber.

PETER COOPER
(1791-1883)



PETER COOPER

BUSINESS MAN, INVENTOR, AND PHILANTHROPIST

PETER COOPER combined the shrewd judgment of the business man with the ingenuity of the practical mechanic and the versatility of the professional promoter of new enterprises.

From the narrative in his own words, which follows, it would seem as though he usually lost interest in each of his undertakings as soon as its success was demonstrated. Something new and untried then claimed his attention. One would think this surely a most unsafe course of procedure for one who wished to achieve success. Yet Peter Cooper *was successful* in every sense of the word. He invented many serviceable devices and machines; he amassed a large fortune; and he was one of our earliest philanthropists and most useful citizens.

The explanation of the phenomenon probably lies in the fact that by close application he was clever enough to keep many irons in the fire at once, without allowing any of them to grow cold. It should be remembered also that in the times in which he lived competition was

less fierce and specialization not so far advanced as at present.

*My father followed the business of a hatter, and the first I remember was being utilized in this business by being set to pull the hair out of rabbit skins, when my head was just above the table. I remained in this business until I could make every part of a hat. My father finally sold out his hatter's business to my eldest brother, by a former wife, and commenced the brewing of ale in the town of Peekskill. It was my business to deliver the kegs of ale to the different places in town and country where it had been sold. Finding this a "slow business," my father bought a place at Catskill, where he commenced again the hatter's business and also that of making bricks. I was made useful in this business in carrying and handling the bricks for the drying process.

My father, at length, finding that his business at Catskill did not answer his expectations, sold out and removed to Brooklyn, N. Y. Here I worked again at the hatter's with my father until again he sold out and bought some property in Newburg, N. Y., on which he erected a brewery. At this business I continued with my father until I was seventeen.

The only time I ever trusted to chance for

*From *Old South Leaflet*, 147 (Edwin D. Mead, Editor).

any profit was about this time, when I got a very wholesome lesson. I had earned about ten dollars beyond my immediate wants, which I invested, by the advice of a relative, in lottery tickets, all which, fortunately for me, drew blanks. This impressed upon me the folly of looking to games of chance for any source of gain or livelihood.

In my seventeenth year I entered as apprentice to the coach-making business. I remained in this four years, till I was of age, and had thoroughly learned the business. During my apprenticeship I received twenty-five dollars a year for my services. To this sum I added something by working at night at coach carving, and such work as I could get. My grandmother gave me the use of a room, in one of her rear buildings on Broadway, where I spent much of my time in nightly work, instead of going with other apprentices who too often went with loose companions and contracted habits that proved their ruin. During my apprenticeship I made for my employer a machine for mortising the hubs of carriages, which proved very profitable to him, and was perhaps the first of its kind used in this country. When I was twenty-one years old my employer offered to build me a shop and set me up in business; but, as I always had a horror of being burdened with debt, and having no capital of my own, I declined his offer.

As soon as I was of age I went to the town of Hempstead, L. I., to see my brother. Here I was persuaded to work for a man at the making of machines for shearing cloth. I continued at this for three years, for a dollar and fifty cents a day, which was regarded as very large wages at that time. I saved enough at the end of my engagement to buy the right of the State of New York for a machine for shearing cloth, and I commenced the manufacture of these machines on my own account. The business proved very successful. The first money I received for the sale of my machine was from Mr. Vassar, of Poughkeepsie, who afterward founded that noble institution for female education, called the Vassar College, at Poughkeepsie. My sales to Mr. Vassar also included one of the patent rights for the county in which he resides. This put in my possession so large an amount of money according to my ideas at that time, about five hundred dollars, that I was very much elated and rejoiced at what I considered my great good fortune. But my joy was soon turned to mourning. On my return from Poughkeepsie I visited my father, who lived then at Newburg. I found the family in the deepest affliction on account of the pressure of debts which my father was unable to pay. The money I had just received from my machines enabled me to

pay the most pressing of these debts, and left me barely the means to purchase materials to commence the making of new machines. Besides this, I became surety for my father for debts not yet matured, which I paid as they fell due, and in consequence of this my father never had the mortification of failing in business. The same is true in my own affairs, notwithstanding some public statements made to the contrary by persons ignorant of the facts.

So far from ever having failed in business, I do not remember the week or month when every man who has ever worked for me did not get his pay when it was due. This is strictly true, through a business life of more than sixty years, in which I have had at times as many as twenty-five hundred people in my employment. The coach-making business I never followed after serving out my apprenticeship. But, soon after I commenced the manufacture of machines for shearing cloth, I made an improvement that enabled me to sell these machines as fast as I could make them. At this time they were in great demand, in consequence of the war of 1812 with England, which stopped our commerce with that country. At the close of the war, however, this business lost its value, and I gave it up. . . .

After some three years' continuance in this

business of manufacture, I bought a twenty years' lease of two houses and six lots of ground where the "Bible House" now stands, opposite the Cooper Union. On this ground I erected four wooden dwelling-houses. I was engaged at this time in the grocery business, in which I continued for three years. Soon after this I purchased a glue factory, with all its stock and buildings, on a lease of twenty-one years, for three acres of ground, on what was then known as the "middle road," between Thirty-first and Thirty-fourth streets. Here I continued to manufacture glue, oil, whiting, prepared chalk, and isinglass to the end of my lease. I then bought ten acres of ground on Maspeth Avenue, Brooklyn, where the business has continued to the present time. What I made by building machines and in the grocery business had enabled me to pay for the glue factory on the day of the purchase.

I very early took to making and contriving for myself, or friends. I remember one of the earliest things I undertook, of my own accord, was to make a pair of shoes. For this purpose I first obtained an old pair, and took them all apart to see the structure, and then, procuring leather, thread, needles, and some suitable tools, without further instruction I made the last and a pair of shoes, which compared very well with the country shoes then in vogue.

When I was an apprentice at the coach-making business, I planned out and made at night a model machine to show how power could be obtained from the natural current of the tide and be applied to various useful purposes. . . .

I remember that Fulton did me the honor to come and see my model and machinery, but he was too much occupied at that time with his own plans of steamboat navigation to pay much attention to my invention.

I had read from the books, or heard said, that there was no loss of power communicated through a crank, except from friction. I doubted this. There are two "dead points" in the crank motion which nothing but the inertia of a fly-wheel or something equivalent can overcome. I made an experiment to show that the rectilinear motion of a piston-rod could produce the rotary motion of an axle with less loss of power than through a crank. By special contrivance I made my piston-rod a part of the circuit of an endless chain, which went around the circumference of a driving wheel, and communicated power without any crank. It would be difficult to describe this machine without drawings, but the result was that I proved to the satisfaction of the City Engineer, against his former convictions, that there was a loss of power in the use of the crank, and I gained, with

my application of the reciprocal and rectilinear motion of the piston-rod, a power which was as five to eight over the crank. I made a small engine on this principle and used it in the "first locomotive," on the Ohio & Baltimore Railroad, making a trial trip with the President along. But, before I came to try it with the train of cars, it was so unskilfully handled by some meddlesome person that it broke twice, and I was obliged, at last, in that experiment, to put a cross-head and crank on the engine. I have the remains of that first model of the engine in my garret yet.

A year before the water was let into the Erie Canal it occurred to me that canal-boats might be propelled by the force of water drawn from a higher level, and made to move a series of endless chains along the course of the canal. So I began to make experiments. I built a flat-bottomed scow, took a couple of men, and choosing that part of the East River that lies between what is now the foot of Eighth Street and where Bellevue Hospital now stands, a distance of one mile—I drove posts into the mud, one hundred feet apart. On these posts I fastened rollers made of block tin and zinc, on which my endless chain could run. There were two rollers on each post, one above the other, so that the chain could run up on one roller and back on the other. Then I made

two miles of chain. This chain is of four horsepower. I tested it. I then arranged a water-wheel to run the chain. This preparation took a deal of time, for I did most of the work myself. When it was completed I took a small skiff, fastened my tow line to the chain, started my wheel, and found that the experiment was a success. I invited Governor Clinton and a few other gentlemen to make a trip. We ran the two miles up and back in eleven minutes. The governor was so well pleased that he paid me eight hundred dollars for the privilege of purchasing the patent right for the use of the canal. . . .

It is about twelve years since I made an endless band of round iron, near three eighths of an inch in diameter, extending in the form of a belt for about three miles, for the purpose of transporting coal from the mines to my furnaces. This belt of iron was supported on wheels fastened to posts, the wheels having grooved surfaces to support the belt. On this belt I fastened buckets formed to receive iron ore. These buckets when filled with ore were on a descending grade sufficient to carry the ore down and return the empty buckets. During the time I owned the Canton property I made a belt of cars which I placed on a double-track railroad. One track was held right over the other in a frame for the purpose. The belt

of cars was placed on a double-track railroad in this framework, and was intended to transport by its own weight a sand-bank into Harris Creek bottom, which I desired then to fill up. The framework, with its rails and belt of cars, was placed on longitudinal sleepers, so as to be moved up to the side of the bank as the sand was being removed. The sand could be carelessly thrown into a long hopper, over the cars, on the upper track. The cars, after dumping their load at the lower end, returned on the lower track, bottom upward, to be constantly refilled.

In early life, when I was first married, I found it necessary to "rock the cradle" while my wife prepared our frugal meals. This was not always convenient in my busy life, and I conceived the idea of making a cradle that would be made to rock by a mechanism. I did so, and, enlarging upon my first idea, I arranged the mechanism for keeping off the flies, and playing a music-box for the amusement of the baby. This cradle was bought of me afterward, by a delighted peddler, who gave me his "whole stock in trade" for the exchange and the privilege of selling the patent in the State of Connecticut. . . .

I planned a torpedo-boat, which might be sent from shore, or from a vessel, toward an enemy's ship six or eight miles off. The tor-

pedo-boat was to be propelled by a screw and a steam engine, and guided and directed toward its object by a couple of steel wires six or eight miles long, unwound from a suitable reel, and adjusted to the steering apparatus of the boat. I tried these wires first on a small steamer that I directed in the Harbor, near the Narrows, and they worked very well for six miles, until another boat came across the wires and broke them. When ready for service, I designed to place red-hot cannon balls in the boiler of my engine, to furnish the steam, the torpedo being placed on a bent piece of iron, and by a proper contrivance reverse the action of the engine, and send the boat back again guided and directed by the wires. I was preparing this torpedo-boat to go with the ship which our citizens were about to send, with provisions, clothing, and medicines, to the unfortunate victims of the Turkish war, and I designed it to be the "bitterest pill" in the whole cargo; but, unfortunately, I did not get it ready in time, and it was soon after burned up in my factory, with all the rest of the contents.

In 1828 I purchased three thousand acres of land within the city limits of Baltimore for one hundred and five thousand dollars (\$105,000). On a part of that property I erected the Canton Iron Works, which, afterward, I sold to Mr. Abbot, of Baltimore. I was drawn into this

speculation in Baltimore by two men who represented that they had large means, and we bought together three thousand acres of land in the city of Baltimore for one hundred and five thousand dollars (\$105,000), taking the whole shore from Fell's Point dock for three miles. After paying my part of the money, I soon found that I had paid all that had been paid upon the property, and that I was even paying the board of the two men who had agreed to take part in the purchase. Finding that to be the situation, I was compelled to say to them that they must pay their part or sell out, or buy me out. Neither of them having the ability to buy, I finally succeeded in getting them to state a price. One offered to go out for ten thousand dollars, the other for a smaller sum; which offers I accepted and bought them out.

When we first purchased the property, it was in the midst of a great excitement created by a promise of the rapid completion of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, which had been commenced by a subscription of five dollars per share. In the course of the first year's operations they had spent more than the five dollars per share. But the road had to make so many short turns in going round points of rocks that they found they could not complete the road without a much larger sum than they had sup-

posed would be necessary; while the many short turns in the road seemed to render it entirely useless for locomotive purposes. The principal stockholders had become so discouraged that they said they would not pay any more, and would lose all they had already paid in. After conversing with them, I told them that, if they would hold on a little while, I would put a small locomotive on the road, which I thought would demonstrate the practicability of using steam engines on the road even with all the short turns in it. I got up a small engine for the purpose, and put it on the road, and invited the stockholders to witness the experiment. After a great deal of trouble and difficulty in accomplishing the work, the stockholders came, and thirty-six men were taken into a car, and with six men on the locomotive which carries its own fuel and water, and having to go up hill eighteen feet to a mile and turn all the short turns around the points of rocks, we succeeded in making the thirteen miles, and we returned from Ellicott's Mills to Baltimore in fifty-seven minutes.

This locomotive was built to demonstrate that cars would be drawn around short curves, beyond anything believed at that time to be possible. The success of this locomotive also answered the question of the possibility of building railroads in a country scarce of capital,

and with immense stretches of very rough country to pass, in order to connect commercial centres, without the deep cuts, the tunnelling, and levelling which short curves might avoid. My contrivance saved this road from bankruptcy.

The discouragement and stoppage of progress in improvement in the city of Baltimore that had been occasioned by the state of things in the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad made it difficult to do anything with the property before mentioned but to keep it, and in order to make it pay something toward meeting the cost, taxes, etc., I determined to build iron works upon it. I had four or five hundred tons of iron ore raised, dug, etc., at Lazaretto Point, and I determined to cut the wood off the property, which was being stolen in every direction, and to burn it into charcoal, and use it up in making charcoal iron—for which purpose I built a rolling-mill, which I afterward sold to Mr. Abbot. In my efforts to make iron, I had to commence to burn the wood into charcoal, and in order to do that I erected large kilns, twenty-five feet in diameter, twelve feet high, circular in form, hooped around with iron at the top, arched over so as to make a tight place in which to put the wood, with single bricks left out in different places in order to smother the fire out when the wood was sufficiently burned.

After having burned the coal in one of these kilns perfectly and believing the fire entirely smothered out, we attempted to take the coal out of the kiln; but, when we had got it about halfway out, the coal itself took fire, and the men, after carrying water for some time to extinguish it, gave it up in despair. I then went myself to the door of the kiln to see if anything more could be done, and just as I entered the door the gas itself took fire, and enveloped me in a sheet of flames. I had to run some ten feet to get out, and in doing so my eyebrows and whiskers were burned, and my fur hat was scorched down to the body of the fur. How I escaped I know not. I seemed to be literally blown out by the explosion, and I narrowly escaped with my life.

After seeing the difficulties that attended the making of iron there, I determined, having so large a property on my hands, to sell it for what I could get, and at the first offer made. I succeeded in getting an offer of nearly what it had cost me from two men from Boston, Amos Binney and Edmund Monroe. They formed out of the property what is known as the Canton Company. I took a considerable portion of my pay in stock, at forty-four dollars the share—par value, one hundred dollars. I reserved the iron works sold to Mr. Abbot. And, as good luck would have it, the stock com-

menced rising almost at once, as soon as it was put into form, and continued to go up in the market until it attained the enormous figures of two hundred and thirty dollars per share. This enabled me to sell out my stock to a very great advantage, so that I made money by the operation.

I then returned to my old business in New York, and after one or two years built the iron factory in Thirty-third Street near Third Avenue. I leased it to a man who had it for one or two years and failed, and I had to take it off his hands. I turned it into a rolling-mill for rolling iron and making wire, and ran it for some years. I then removed to Trenton, N. J., where I bought water power to carry the works on, and enlarged the works by building a mill and a wire factory. A few years later I built three large blast furnaces at Phillipsburg, the largest then known, near Easton, Penn.; bought the Andover mines, and built a railroad through a rough country for eight miles, to bring ore down to the furnaces, at the rate of 40,000 tons a year. After running the works for several years I was induced to form them into a company called the Trenton Iron Works, including the rolling-mills, and the blast furnaces, and 11,000 acres known as the Ringwood property. I had built a second rolling-mill and wire factory in Trenton, which was also included in the

company. I sold one half of these works in the formation of the company. This continued for a number of years, when a division was made, and the company took one part of the property, the blast furnaces, and I took the rolling-mills and the Ringwood property. This property is still in the family.

During all this time I had continued the manufacture of glue, isinglass, oil, prepared chalk, paris white, and also the grinding of white lead, and fulling of buckskins for the manufacture of buckskin leather. It was in one of those mills above mentioned that the first iron beams were rolled, now so much used in fireproof buildings. In planning the building of the Cooper Union I desired to make it fireproof as far as possible, and found no such iron beams could be obtained. I determined to have them rolled at one of my mills but found, in the end, that the necessary experiments and suitable machinery had cost me seventy-five thousand dollars. It has proved, however, a profitable business since.

It is now (1877) twenty years since I became the president of the North American Telegraph Company, when it controlled more than one half of all the lines then in the country; also president of the New York, Newfoundland, & London Telegraph Company. An attempt had been made to put a line of telegraph across

Newfoundland, on which some work had been done. Cyrus W. Field, Moses Taylor, Marshal O. Roberts, Wilson G. Hunt, and myself completed that work across the Island of Newfoundland, and then laid a cable across the Gulf of St. Lawrence, intending it as the beginning of a line from Europe to America by telegraphic communication. After one form of difficulty after another had been surmounted, we found that more than ten years had passed before we got a cent in return and we had been spending money the whole time. . . .

It happened more than thirty years ago that I was elected a member of the Common Council of this city.

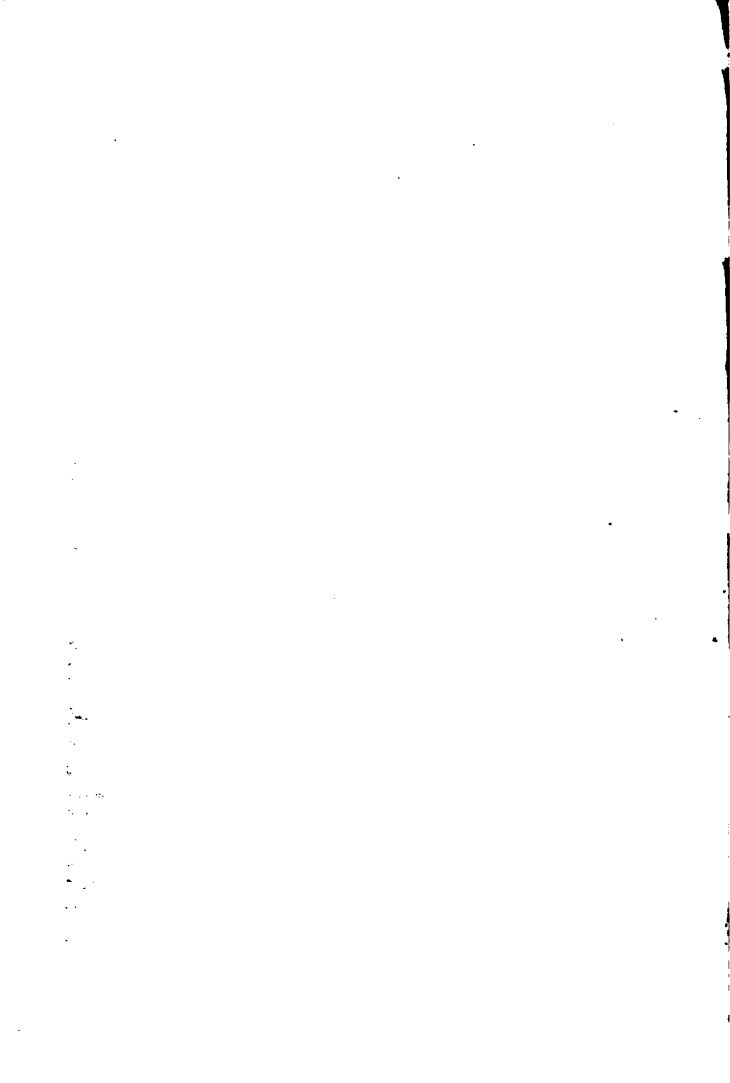
At that time I became acquainted with a gentleman who had then lately returned from France. That gentleman informed me that while he was in Paris he had attended the free Polytechnic school provided by the government. He spoke in glowing terms of the great advantage he had received from the consummate ability of the teachers and the perfect appliances used for illustration. What interested me most deeply was the fact that hundreds of young men were there from all parts of France, living on a bare crust of bread a day to get the benefit of those lectures. Feeling then, as I always have, my own want of education, and more especially my want of scientific

knowledge as applicable to the various callings in which I had been engaged, it was this want of my own, which I felt so keenly; that led me, in deep sympathy for those whom I knew would be subject to the same wants and inconvenience that I had encountered—it was this feeling which led me to provide an institution where a course of instruction would be open and free to all who felt a want of scientific knowledge, as applicable to any of the useful purposes of life. Having started in life with naked hands and an honest purpose, I persevered through long years of trial and effort to obtain the means to erect this building, which is now entirely devoted, with all its rents and revenue of every name and nature, to the advancement of science and art. . . . I want it appropriated as soon as possible to the education of the young men and young women of New York City, and appropriated to *free* education. There must be no fee paid in the Cooper Union, for education ought to be as free as air and water. . . . I have given practically all the property that I can control to build this building, and thirty thousand dollars more which I have left over, with which to furnish the apparatus required, and start the work of instruction. I have called this building the Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. Against my wishes and against my will, the legislature have, unfor-

tunately, attached to it the name of Cooper. I did not want my name attached to the Union. I wanted this to be a union of well-disposed people in New York who are willing to contribute to carry out the work of free education. The great object that I desire to accomplish by the erection of this Institution is to open the avenues of scientific knowledge to the youth of our city and country, and so unfold the volume of Nature that the young may see the beauties of creation, enjoy its blessings, and learn to love the Author from whom cometh every good and perfect gift.

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ANDREW CARNEGIE
(1837-)



ANDREW CARNEGIE'

THE TELEGRAPH CLERK WHO MADE AN INVESTMENT

ANDREW CARNEGIE went to work as a bobbin-boy at twelve years of age, and received twenty cents a day for his labor. The more aristocratic John D. Rockefeller went to school till he was sixteen, and then secured a clerical position at about fifty cents a day. Both boys were gifted with canny shrewdness, determination to succeed, and genius for organization. The outcome in both cases was much the same.

Mr. Carnegie's world-famed gifts to education are bestowed upon the public libraries which endeavor to be of assistance to the unlettered man who wishes to instruct himself, while Mr. Rockefeller's beneficence is largely devoted to the education work of colleges and universities. The story which follows explains Mr. Carnegie's interest in public libraries. Is it fair to assume that Mr. Rockefeller's sympathy for the cause of the higher, formal education was won by his experience in the

local high school and the Cleveland commercial college that he attended for a few months?

*It is a great pleasure to tell how I served my apprenticeship as a business man. But there seems to be a question preceding this: Why did I become a business man? I am sure that I should never have selected a business career if I had been permitted to choose.

The eldest son of parents who were themselves poor, I had, fortunately, to begin to perform some useful work in the world while still very young in order to earn an honest livelihood, and was thus shown even in early boyhood that my duty was to assist my parents, and like them, become, as soon as possible, a bread-winner in the family. What I could get to do, not what I desired, was the question.

When I was born my father was a well-to-do master-weaver in Dunfermline, Scotland. He owned no less than four damask-loom, and employed apprentices. This was before the days of steam factories for the manufacture of linen. A few large merchants took orders, and employed master-weavers, such as my father, to weave the cloth, the merchants supplying the materials.

As the factory system developed, hand-loom weaving naturally declined, and my father

*From "The Gospel of Wealth," Doubleday, Page & Co., 1886-1900.

was one of the sufferers by the change. The first serious lesson of my life came to me one day when he had taken in the last work to the merchant, and returned to our little home greatly distressed because there was no more work for him to do. I was then just about ten years of age, but the lesson burned into my heart, and I resolved then that the wolf of poverty should be driven from our door some day, if I could do it.

The question of selling the old looms and starting for the United States came up in the family council, and I heard it discussed from day to day. It was finally resolved to take the plunge and join relatives already in Pittsburg. I well remember that neither father nor mother thought the change would be otherwise than a great sacrifice for them, but that "it would be better for the two boys. . . ."

On arriving in Allegheny City (there were four of us: father, mother, my younger brother, and myself), my father entered a cotton factory. I soon followed, and served as a "bobbin-boy," and this is how I began my preparation for subsequent apprenticeship as a business man. I received one dollar and twenty cents a week, and was then just about twelve years old.

I cannot tell you how proud I was when I received my first week's own earnings. One dollar and twenty cents made by myself and

given to me because I had been of some use in the world! No longer entirely dependent upon my parents, but at last admitted to the family partnership as a contributing member and able to help them! I think this makes a man out of a boy sooner than almost anything else, and a real man, too, if there be any germ of true manhood in him. It is everything to feel that you are useful.

I have had to deal with great sums. Many millions of dollars have since passed through my hands. But the genuine satisfaction I had from that one dollar and twenty cents outweighs any subsequent pleasure in money-getting. It was the direct reward of honest, manual labour; it represented a week of very hard work—so hard that, but for the aim and end which sanctified it, slavery might not be much too strong a term to describe it.

For a lad of twelve to rise and breakfast every morning, except the blessed Sunday morning, and go into the streets and find his way to the factory and begin to work while it was still dark outside, and not be released until after darkness came again in the evening, forty minutes' interval only being allowed at noon, was a terrible task.

But I was young and had my dreams, and something always told me that this would not, could not, should not last—I should some day

get into a better position. Besides this, I felt myself no longer a mere boy, but quite a little man, and this made me happy.

A change soon came, for a kind old Scotsman, who knew some of our relatives, made bobbins, and took me into his factory before I was thirteen. But here for a time it was even worse than in the cotton factory, because I was set to fire a boiler in the cellar, and actually to run the small steam engine which drove the machinery. The firing of the boiler was all right, for fortunately we did not use coal, but the refuse wooden chips; and I always liked to work in wood. But the responsibility of keeping the water right and of running the engine, and the danger of my making a mistake and blowing the whole factory to pieces, caused too great a strain, and I often awoke and found myself sitting up in bed through the night, trying the steam-gauges. But I never told them at home that I was having a hard tussle. No, no! everything must be bright to them. . . .

My kind employer, John Hay—peace to his ashes!—soon relieved me of the undue strain, for he needed some one to make out bills and keep his accounts, and finding that I could write a plain school-boy hand and could “cipher,” he made me his only clerk. But still I had to work hard upstairs in the factory, for the clerking took but little time. . . .

I come now to the third step in my apprenticeship, for I had already taken two, as you see—the cotton factory and then the bobbin factory; and with the third—the third time is the chance, you know—deliverance came. I obtained a situation as messenger boy in the telegraph office of Pittsburg when I was fourteen. Here I entered a new world.

Amid books, newspapers, pencils, pen and ink and writing-pads, and a clean office, bright windows, and the literary atmosphere, I was the happiest boy alive.

My only dread was that I should some day be dismissed because I did not know the city; for it is necessary that a messenger boy should know all the firms and addresses of men who are in the habit of receiving telegrams. But I was a stranger in Pittsburg. However, I made up my mind that I would learn to repeat successively each business house in the principal streets and was soon able to shut my eyes and begin at one side of Wood Street, and call every firm successively to the top, then pass to the other side and call every firm to the bottom. Before long I was able to do this with the business streets generally. My mind was then at rest upon that point.

Of course every ambitious messenger boy wants to become an operator, and before the operators arrive in the early mornings the boys

slipped up to the instruments and practised. This I did, and was soon able to talk to the boys in the other offices along the line, who were also practising.

One morning I heard Philadelphia calling Pittsburg, and giving the signal, "Death message." Great attention was then paid to "death messages," and I thought I ought to try to take this one. I answered and did so, and went off and delivered it before the operator came. After that the operators sometimes used to ask me to work for them.

Having a sensitive ear for sound, I soon learned to take messages by the ear, which was then very uncommon—I think only two persons in the United States could then do it. Now every operator takes by ear, so easy is it to follow and do what any other boy can if you only have to. This brought me into notice, and finally I became an operator, and received the, to me, enormous recompense of twenty-five dollars per month—three hundred dollars a year!

This was a fortune—the very sum that I had fixed when I was a factory-worker as the fortune I wished to possess, because the family could live on three hundred dollars a year and be almost or quite independent. Here it was at last! But I was soon to be in receipt of extra compensation for extra work.

The six newspapers of Pittsburg received telegraphic news in common. Six copies of each dispatch were made by a gentleman who received six dollars per week for the work, and he offered me a gold dollar every week if I would do it, of which I was very glad indeed, because I always liked to work with news and scribble for newspapers.

The reporters came to a room every evening for the news which I had prepared, and this brought me into most pleasant intercourse with these clever fellows, and besides, I got a dollar a week as pocket-money, for this was not considered family revenue by me.

I think this last step of doing something beyond one's task is fully entitled to be considered "business." The other revenue, you see, was just salary obtained for regular work; but here was a little business operation upon my own account, and I was very proud indeed of my gold dollar every week.

The Pennsylvania Railroad shortly after this was completed to Pittsburg, and the genius, Thomas A. Scott, was its superintendent. He often came to the telegraph office to talk to his chief, the general superintendent, at Altoona, and I became known to him in this way.

When that great railway system put up a wire of its own, he asked me to be his clerk and operator; so I left the telegraph office—in

which there is great danger that a young man may be permanently buried as it were—and became connected with the railways.

The new appointment was accompanied by what was, to me, a tremendous increase of salary. It jumped from twenty-five to thirty-five dollars per month. Mr. Scott was then receiving one hundred and twenty-five dollars per month, and I used to wonder what on earth he could do with so much money.

I remained for thirteen years in the service of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and was at last superintendent of the Pittsburg division of the road, successor to Mr. Scott, who had in the meantime risen to the office of vice-president of the company.

One day Mr. Scott, who was the kindest of men, and had taken a great fancy to me, asked if I had or could find five hundred dollars to invest.

Here the business instinct came into play. I felt that as the door was opened for a business investment with my chief, it would be wilful flying in the face of providence if I did not jump at it; so I answered promptly:

"Yes, sir; I think I can."

"Very well," he said, "get it; a man has just died who owns ten shares in the Adams Express Company which I want you to buy. It will cost you fifty dollars per share, and I can help

you with a little balance if you cannot raise it all."

Here was a queer position. The available assets of the whole family were not five hundred dollars. But there was one member of the family whose ability, pluck, and resource never failed us, and I felt sure the money could be raised somehow or other by my mother.

Indeed, had Mr. Scott known our position he would have advanced it himself; but the last thing in the world the proud Scot will do is to reveal his poverty and rely upon others. The family had managed by this time to purchase a small house and pay for it in order to save rent. My recollection is that it was worth eight hundred dollars.

The matter was laid before the council of three that night, and the oracle spoke: "Must be done. Mortgage our house. I will take the steamer in the morning for Ohio, and see uncle, and ask him to arrange it. I am sure he can." This was done. Of course her visit was successful—where did she ever fail?

The money was procured, paid over; ten shares of Adams Express Company stock was mine; but no one knew that our little home had been mortgaged "to give our boy a start."

Adams Express stock then paid monthly dividends of one per cent., and the first check for five dollars arrived. I can see it now, and

I well remember the signature of "J. C. Babcock, Cashier," who wrote a big "John Hancock" hand.

The next day being Sunday, we boys—myself and my ever-constant companions—took our usual Sunday afternoon stroll in the country, and sitting down in the woods, I showed them this check saying: "Eureka! We have found it."

Here was something new to all of us, for none of us had ever received anything but from toil. A return from capital was something strange and new.

How money could make money, how, without any attention from me, this mysterious golden visitor should come, led to such speculation upon the part of the young fellows, and I was for the first time hailed as a "capitalist."

You see, I was beginning to serve my apprenticeship as a business man in a satisfactory manner.

A very important incident in my life occurred when, one day in a train, a nice, farmer-looking gentleman approached me, saying that the conductor had told him I was connected with the Pennsylvania Railroad, and he would like to show me something. He pulled from a small green bag the model of the first sleeping-car. This was Mr. Woodruff, the inventor.

Its value struck me like a flash. I asked

him to come to Altoona the following week, and he did so. Mr. Scott, with his usual quickness, grasped the idea. A contract was made with Mr. Woodruff to put two trial cars on the Pennsylvania Railroad. Before leaving Altoona Mr. Woodruff came and offered me an interest in the venture, which I promptly accepted. But how I was to make my payments rather troubled me, for the cars were to be paid for in monthly instalments after delivery, and my first monthly payment was to be two hundred and seventeen dollars and a half.

I had not the money, and I did not see any way of getting it. But I finally decided to visit the local banker and ask him for a loan, pledging myself to repay at the rate of fifteen dollars per month. He promptly granted it. Never shall I forget his putting his arm over my shoulder, saying, "Oh, yes, Andy; you are all right."

I then and there signed my first note. Proud day this; and surely now no one will dispute that I was becoming a "business man." I had signed my first note, and most important of all—for any fellow can sign a note—I had found a banker willing to take it as "good."

My subsequent payments were made by the receipts from the sleeping-cars, and I really made my first considerable sum from this

investment in the Woodruff Sleeping-car Company, which was afterward absorbed by Mr. Pullman—a remarkable man whose name is now known over all the world.

Shortly after this I was appointed superintendent of the Pittsburg division, and returned to my dear old home, smoky Pittsburg. Wooden bridges were then used exclusively upon the railways, and the Pennsylvania Railroad was experimenting with a bridge built of cast-iron. I saw that wooden bridges would not do for the future, and organized a company in Pittsburg to build iron bridges.

Here again I had recourse to the bank, because my share of the capital was twelve hundred and fifty dollars, and I had not the money; but the bank lent it to me, and we began the Keystone Bridge Works, which proved a great success. This company built the first great bridge over the Ohio River, three hundred feet span, and has built many of the most important structures since.

This was my beginning in manufacturing; and from that start all our other works have grown, the profits of one building the other. My "apprenticeship" as a business man soon ended, for I resigned my position as an officer of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company to give exclusive attention to business.

I was no longer merely an official working

for others upon a salary, but a full-fledged business man working upon my own account.

I never was quite reconciled to working for other people. At the most, the railway officer had to look forward to the enjoyment of a stated salary, and he had a great many people to please; even if he gets to be president, he has sometimes a board of directors who cannot know what is best to be done; and even if this board be satisfied, he had a board of stockholders to criticise him, and as the property is not his own, he cannot manage it as he pleases.

I always liked the idea of being my own master, of manufacturing something and giving employment to many men. There is only one thing to think of manufacturing if you are a Pittsburger, for Pittsburg even then had asserted her supremacy as the "Iron City," the leading iron-and-steel-manufacturing city in America.

So my indispensable and clever partners, who had been my boy companions, I am delighted to say—some of the very boys who had met in the grove to wonder at the five-dollar check—began business, and still continue extending it to meet the ever-growing and ever-changing wants of our most progressive country, year after year.

Always we are hoping that we need expand no farther; yet ever we are finding that to stop expanding would be to fall behind; and even

to-day the successive improvements and inventions follow each other so rapidly that we see just as much yet to be done as ever.

When the manufacturer of steel ceases to grow he begins to decay, so we must keep on extending. The result of all these developments is that three pounds of finished steel are now bought in Pittsburg for two cents, which is cheaper than anywhere else on the earth, and that our country has become the greatest producer of iron in the world.

And so ends the story of my apprenticeship and graduation as a business man. . . .

* * * * *

When I was a working boy in Pittsburg, Colonel Anderson of Allegheny—a name I can never speak without feelings of devotional gratitude—opened his little library of four hundred books for boys. Every Saturday afternoon he was in attendance at his house to exchange books. No one but he who has felt it can ever know the intense longing with which the arrival of Saturday was awaited, that a new book might be had. My brother and Mr. Phipps, who have been my principal business partners through life, shared with me Colonel Anderson's precious generosity; and it was when revelling in the treasures which he opened to us

that I resolved, if ever wealth came to me, that it should be used to establish free libraries, that other poor boys might receive opportunities similar to those for which we were indebted to that noble man. . . .

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

(1839-)

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

THE RICHEST MAN'S START IN LIFE

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER is said to be the richest man in the world, so we may perhaps safely describe him as the most successful business man that the world has ever seen. We learn that he started on the bottom round of the financial ladder, receiving at sixteen years of age fifty dollars for his first three months of work. The story of his start in life, as here given in his own words, is one of absorbing interest to every man and boy who must make his own way in the world:

THE DIFFICULT ART OF GETTING

*To my father I owe a great debt in that he himself trained me to practical ways. He was engaged in different enterprises; he used to tell me about these things, explaining their significance; and he taught me the principles and methods of business. From early boy-

*From "Random Reminiscences of Men and Events," Doubleday, Page & Co., 1908-1909.

hood I kept a little book which I remember I called Ledger A—and this little volume is still preserved—containing my receipts and expenditures as well as an account of the small sums that I was taught to give away regularly.

Naturally, people of modest means lead a closer family life than those who have plenty of servants to do everything for them. I count it a blessing that I was of the former class. When I was seven or eight years old I engaged in my first business enterprise with the assistance of my mother. I owned some turkeys, and she presented me with the curds from the milk to feed them. I took care of the birds myself, and sold them all in businesslike fashion. My receipts were all profits, as I had nothing to do with the expense account, and my records were kept as carefully as I knew how.

We thoroughly enjoyed this little business affair, and I can still close my eyes, and distinctly see the gentle and dignified birds walking quietly along the brook and through the woods, cautiously stealing the way to their nests. To this day I enjoy the sight of a flock of turkeys, and never miss an opportunity of studying them.

My mother was a good deal of a disciplinarian, and upheld the standard of the family with a birch switch when it showed a tend-

ency to deteriorate. Once, when I was being punished for some unfortunate doings which had taken place in the village school, I felt called upon to explain after the whipping had begun that I was innocent of the charge.

"Never mind," said my mother, "we have started in on this whipping, and it will do for the next time." This attitude was maintained to its final conclusion in many ways. One night, I remember, we boys could not resist the temptation to go skating in the moonlight, notwithstanding the fact that we had been expressly forbidden to skate at night. Almost before we got fairly started we heard a cry for help, and found a neighbour, who had broken through the ice, was in danger of drowning. By pushing a pole to him we succeeded in fishing him out, and restored him safe and sound to his grateful family. As we were not generally expected to save a man's life every time we skated, my brother William and I felt that there were mitigating circumstances connected with this particular disobedience which might be taken into account in the final judgment, but this idea proved to be erroneous.

STARTING AT WORK

Although the plan had been to send me to college, it seemed best at sixteen that I should

leave the high school in which I had nearly completed the course and go into a commercial college in Cleveland for a few months. They taught bookkeeping and some of the fundamental principles of commercial transactions. This training, though it lasted only a few months, was very valuable to me. But how to get a job—that was the question. I tramped the streets for days and weeks, asking merchants and storekeepers if they didn't want a boy; but the offer of my services met with little appreciation. No one wanted a boy, and very few showed any overwhelming anxiety to talk with me on the subject. At last one man on the Cleveland docks told me that I might come back after the noonday meal. I was elated; it now seemed that I might get a start.

I was in a fever of anxiety lest I should lose this one opportunity that I had unearthed. When finally, at what seemed to me the time, I presented myself to my would-be employer:

"We will give you a chance," he said, but not a word passed between us about pay. This was September 26, 1855. I joyfully went to work. The name of the firm was Hewitt & Tuttle.

In beginning the work I had some advantages. My father's training, as I have said, was practical, the course at the commercial college had taught me the rudiments of busi-

ness, and I thus had a groundwork to build upon. I was fortunate, also, in working under the supervision of the bookkeeper, who was a fine disciplinarian, and well disposed toward me.

When January, 1856, arrived, Mr. Tuttle presented me with \$50 for my three months' work, which was no doubt all that I was worth, and it was entirely satisfactory.

For the next year, with \$25 a month, I kept my position, learning the details and clerical work connected with such a business. It was a wholesale produce commission and forwarding concern, my department being particularly the office duties. Just above me was the bookkeeper for the house, and he received \$2,000 a year salary in lieu of his share of the profits of the firm of which he was a member. At the end of the first fiscal year when he left I assumed his clerical and bookkeeping work, for which I received the salary of \$500.

As I look back upon this term of business apprenticeship, I can see that its influence was vitally important in its relations to what came after.

To begin with, my work was done in the office of the firm itself. I was almost always present when they talked of their affairs, laid out their plans, and decided upon a course of action. I thus had an advantage over other

boys of my age, who were quicker and who could figure and write better than I. The firm conducted a business with so many ramifications that this education was quite extensive. They owned dwelling-houses, warehouses, and buildings which were rented for offices and a variety of uses, and I had to collect the rents. They shipped by rail, canal, and lake. There were many different kinds of negotiations and transactions going on, and with all these I was in close touch.

Thus it happened that my duties were vastly more interesting than those of an office-boy in a large house to-day. I thoroughly enjoyed the work. Gradually the auditing of accounts was left in my hands. All the bills were first passed upon by me, and I took this duty very seriously.

One day, I remember, I was in a neighbour's office, when the local plumber presented himself with a bill about a yard long. This neighbour was one of those very busy men. He was connected with what seemed to me an unlimited number of enterprises. He merely glanced at this tiresome bill, turned to the bookkeeper, and said:

"Please pay this bill."

As I was studying the same plumber's bills in great detail, checking every item, if only for a few cents, and finding it to be greatly

to the firm's interest to do so, this casual way of conducting affairs did not appeal to me. I had trained myself to the point of view doubtless held by many young men in business to-day, that my check on a bill was the executive act which released my employer's money from the till, and was attended with more responsibility than the spending of my own funds. I made up my mind that such business methods could not succeed.

Passing bills, collecting rents, adjusting claims, and work of this kind brought me in association with a great variety of people. I had to learn how to get on with all these different classes, and still keep the relations between them and the house pleasant. One particular kind of negotiation came to me which took all the skill I could master to bring to a successful end.

We would receive, for example, a shipment of marble from Vermont to Cleveland. This involved handling by railroad, canal, and lake boats. The cost of losses or damage had to be somehow fixed between these three different carriers, and it taxed all the ingenuity of a boy of seventeen to work out this problem to the satisfaction of all concerned, including my employers. But I thought the task no hardship, and so far as I can remember I never had any disagreement of moment with any of these transportation interests. This experi-

ence in conducting all sorts of transactions at such an impressionable age, with the helping hand of my superiors to fall back upon in an emergency, was highly interesting to me. It was my first step in learning the principle of negotiation, of which I hope to speak later.

The training that comes from working for some one else, to whom we feel a responsibility, I am sure was of great value to me.

I should estimate that the salaries of that time were far less than half of what is paid for equivalent positions to-day. The next year I was offered a salary of \$700, but thought I was worth \$800. We had not settled the matter by April, and as a favourable opportunity had presented itself for carrying on the same business on my own account, I resigned my position.

In those days, in Cleveland, every one knew almost every one else in town. Among the merchants was a young Englishman named M. B. Clark, perhaps ten years older than I, who wanted to establish a business and was in search of a partner. He had \$2,000 to contribute to the firm, and wanted a partner who could furnish an equal amount. This seemed a good opportunity for me. I had saved up \$700 or \$800, but where to get the rest was a problem.

I talked the matter over with my father, who told me that he had always intended to give \$1,000 to each of his children when they reached twenty-one. He said that if I wished to receive my share at once, instead of waiting, he would advance it to me and I could pay interest upon the sum until I was twenty-one.

"But, John," he added, "the rate is ten."

At that time 10 per cent. a year interest was a very common rate for such loans. At the banks the rate might not have been quite so high; but of course the financial institutions could not supply all the demands, so there was much private borrowing at high figures. As I needed this money for the partnership, I gladly accepted my father's offer, and so began business as the junior partner of the new firm, which was called Clark & Rockefeller.

It was a great thing to be my own employer. Mentally I swelled with pride—a partner in a firm with \$4,000 capital! Mr. Clark attended to the buying and selling, and I took charge of the finance and the books. We at once began to do a large business, dealing in carload lots and cargoes of produce. Naturally we soon needed more money to take care of the increasing trade. There was nothing to do but to attempt to borrow from a bank. But would the bank lend to us?

THE FIRST LOAN

I went to a bank president whom I knew, and who knew me. I remember perfectly how anxious I was to get that loan and to establish myself favourably with the banker. This gentleman was T. P. Handy, a sweet and gentle old man, well known as a high-grade, beautiful character. For fifty years he was interested in young men. He knew me as a boy in the Cleveland schools. I gave him all the particulars of our business, telling him frankly about our affairs—what we wanted to use the money for, etc., etc. I waited for the verdict with almost trembling eagerness.

“How much do you want?” he said.

“Two thousand dollars.”

“All right, Mr. Rockefeller, you can have it,” he replied. “Just give me your own warehouse receipts; they’re good enough for me.”

As I left that bank, my elation can hardly be imagined. I held up my head—think of it, a bank had trusted me for \$2,000! I felt that I was now a man of importance in the community.

For long years after the head of this bank was a friend indeed; he loaned me money when I needed it, and I needed it almost all the time, and all the money he had. It was a source

of gratification that later I was able to go to him and recommend that he should make a certain investment in Standard Oil Stock. He agreed that he would like to do so, but he said that the sum involved was not at the moment available, and so at my suggestion I turned banker for him, and in the end he took out his principal with a very handsome profit. It is a pleasure to testify even at this late date to his great kindness and faith in me.

STICKING TO BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

Mr. Handy trusted me because he believed we would conduct our young business on conservative and proper lines, and I well remember about this time an example of how hard it is sometimes to live up to what one knows is the right business principle. Not long after our concern was started our best customer—that is, the man who made the largest consignments—asked that we should allow him to draw in advance on current shipments before the produce or a bill of lading were actually in hand. We, of course, wished to oblige this important man, but I, as the financial member of the firm, objected, though I feared we should lose his business.

The situation seemed very serious; my partner was impatient with me for refusing to

yield, and in this dilemma I decided to go personally to see if I could not induce our customer to relent. I had been unusually fortunate when I came face to face with men in winning their friendship, and my partner's displeasure put me on my mettle. I felt that when I got into touch with this gentleman I could convince him that what he proposed would result in a bad precedent. My reasoning (in my own mind) was logical and convincing. I went to see him, and put forth all the arguments that I had so carefully thought out. But he stormed about, and in the end I had the further humiliation of confessing to my partner that I had failed. I had been able to accomplish absolutely nothing.

Naturally, he was very much disturbed at the possibility of losing our most valued connection, but I insisted and we stuck to our principles and refused to give the shipper the accommodation he had asked. What was our surprise and gratification to find that he continued his relations with us as though nothing had happened, and did not again refer to the matter. I learned afterward that an old country banker, named John Gardener, of Norwalk, O., who had much to do with our consignor, was watching this little matter intently, and I have ever since believed that he originated the suggestion to tempt us to do what we stated

we did not do as a test, and his story about our firm stand for what we regarded as sound business principles did us great good.

About this time I began to go out and solicit business—a branch of work I had never before attempted. I undertook to visit every person in our part of the country who was in any way connected with the kind of business that we were engaged in, and went pretty well over the states of Ohio and Indiana. I made up my mind that I could do this best by simply introducing our firm, and not pressing for immediate consignments. I told them that I represented Clark & Rockefeller, commission merchants, and that I had no wish to interfere with any connection that they had at present, but if the opportunity offered we should be glad to serve them, etc., etc.

To our great surprise, business came in upon us so fast that we hardly knew how to take care of it, and in the first year our sales amounted to half a million dollars.

Then, and indeed for many years after, it seemed as though there was no end to the money needed to carry on and develop the business. As our successes began to come, I seldom put my head upon the pillow at night without speaking a few words to myself in this wise:

“Now a little success, soon you will fall down,

soon you will be overthrown. Because you have got a start, you think you are quite a merchant; look out, or you will lose your head—go steady.” These intimate conversations with myself, I am sure, had a great influence on my life. I was afraid I could not stand my prosperity, and tried to teach myself not to get puffed up with any foolish notions.

My loans from my father were many. Our relations on finances were a source of some anxiety to me, and were not quite so humorous as they seem now as I look back at them. Occasionally he would come to me and say that if I needed money in the business he would be able to loan some, and as I always needed capital I was glad indeed to get it, even at 10 per cent. interest. Just at the moment when I required the money most he was apt to say:

“My son, I find I have got to have that money.”

“Of course, you shall have it at once,” I would answer, but I knew that he was testing me, and that when I paid him, he would hold the money without its earning anything for a little time, and then offer it back later. I confess that this little discipline should have done me good, and perhaps did, but while I concealed it from him, the truth is I was not particularly pleased with his application of

tests to discover if my financial ability was equal to such shocks.

INTEREST AT 10 PER CENT.

These experiences with my father remind me that in the early days there was often much discussion as to what should be paid for the use of money. Many people protested that the rate of 10 per cent. was outrageous, and none but a wicked man would exact such a charge. I was accustomed to argue that money was worth what it would bring—no one would pay 10 per cent., or 5 per cent., or 3 per cent. unless the borrower believed that at this rate it was profitable to employ it. As I was always the borrower at that time, I certainly did not argue for paying more than was necessary.

Among the most persistent and heated discussions I ever had were those with the dear old lady who kept the boarding-house where my brother William and I lived when we were away from home at school. I used to greatly enjoy these talks, for she was an able woman and a good talker, and as she charged us only a dollar a week for board and lodging, and fed us well, I certainly was her friend. This was about the usual price for board in the small towns in those days, where the produce was raised almost entirely on the place.

This estimable lady was violently opposed to loaners obtaining high rates of interest, and we had frequent and earnest arguments on the subject. She knew that I was accustomed to make loans for my father, and she was familiar with the rates secured. But all the arguments in the world did not change the rate, and it came down only when the supply of money grew more plentiful.

I have usually found that important alterations in public opinion in regard to business matters have been of slow growth along the line of proved economic theory—very rarely have improvements in these relationships come about through hastily devised legislation.

One can hardly realize how difficult it was to get capital for active business enterprises at that time. In the country farther west much higher rates were paid, which applied usually to personal loans on which a business risk was run, but it shows how different the conditions for young business men were then than now.

A NIMBLE BORROWER

Speaking of borrowing at the banks reminds me of one of the most strenuous financial efforts I ever made. We had to raise the money to accept an offer for a large business. It required many hundreds of thousands of dollars—and

in cash—securities would not answer. I received the message at about noon and had to get off on the three-o'clock train. I drove from bank to bank, asking each president or cashier, whomever I could find first, to get ready for me all the funds he could possibly lay hands on. I told them I would be back to get the money later. I rounded up all of our banks in the city, and made a second journey to get the money, and kept going until I secured the necessary amount. With this I was off on the three-o'clock train, and closed the transaction. In these early days I was a good deal of a traveller, visiting our plants, making new connections, seeing people, arranging plans to extend our business—and it often called for very rapid work.

RAISING CHURCH FUNDS

When I was but seventeen or eighteen I was elected as a trustee in the church. It was a mission branch, and occasionally I had to hear members who belonged to the main body speak of the mission as though it were not quite so good as the big mother church. This strengthened our resolve to show them that we could paddle our own canoe.

Our first church was not a very grand affair, and there was a mortgage of \$2,000 on it which had been a dispiriting influence for years.

The holder of the mortgage had long demanded that he should be paid, but somehow even the interest was barely kept up, and the creditor finally threatened to sell us out. As it happened, the money had been lent by a deacon in the church, but notwithstanding this fact, he felt that he should have his money, and perhaps he really needed it. Anyhow, he proposed to take such steps as were necessary to get it. The matter came to a head one Sunday morning, when the minister announced from the pulpit that the \$2,000 would have to be raised, or we should lose our church building. I therefore found myself at the door of the church as the congregation came and went.

As each member came by I buttonholed him, and got him to promise to give something toward the extinguishing of that debt. I pleaded and urged, and almost threatened. As each one promised, I put his name and the amount down in my little book, and continued to solicit from every possible subscriber.

This campaign for raising the money which started that morning after church lasted for several months. It was a great undertaking to raise such a sum of money in small amounts ranging from a few cents to the more magnificent promises of gifts to be paid at the rate of twenty-five or fifty cents per week. The plan

absorbed me. I contributed what I could, and my first ambition to earn more money was aroused by this and similar undertakings in which I was constantly engaged.

But at last the \$2,000 was all in hand, and a proud day it was when the debt was extinguished. I hope the members of the mother church were properly humiliated to see how far we had gone beyond their expectations, but I do not now recall that they expressed the surprise that we flattered ourselves they must have felt.

The begging experiences I had at that time were full of interest. I went at the task with pride rather than the reverse, and I continued it until my increasing cares and responsibilities compelled me to resign the actual working out of details to others.

JOHN BIGELOW
(1817-1911)



JOHN BIGELOW

A COUNTRY BOY IN NEW YORK STATE

JOHN BIGELOW, lawyer, diplomat, man of letters and distinguished public servant, had one of the longest and most honorable careers of any American of recent years. He began life as a country boy in New York State, driving the cows to pasture, picking berries, helping to milk, to plough, to make hay—all the world-old tasks of boys in the country. In after years he was editor of a famous newspaper, United States minister to France, and held many other offices of public trust. He describes his own boyhood with charm and humor in "Retrospections of an Active Life." (Doubleday, Page & Co.)

My father, as I have said, had a country store by the riverside, and several sloops, all of which were built on his premises and which plied between Malden (as it came to be called instead of Bristol) and New York. He had besides a farm of about one hundred and fifty acres.

In his store he kept supplies of every nature required by the people living within travelling distances—dry-goods, groceries, hardware, tools, some medicines, stationery, molasses, vinegar, potatoes, in fact everything for which there was a market in our neighborhood. He bought in turn whatever the people had to sell, most of which he shipped to New York for a market. Much of their produce his captains sold for his customers, simply charging them the freight. In those days the chief articles that he shipped were bark, lumber, leather, wood, butter, hay, and sometimes grain. In return he brought supplies for the store, and hides which were sent up to be tanned into leather in the Catskill Mountains at Hunter, Lexington, Hainesville, and the neighborhood, where there was an abundance of hemlock forest, the bark of which, in those days, was then used exclusively for tanning hides. These hides had to be transported by land eight or ten miles to the tanneries, and when tanned the leather had to be carried the same distance back to the wharf, and constituted one of the most profitable articles of freight for our sloops. Soon after the time of which I am speaking, and as the supply of hemlock bark was nearly exhausted, a chemical process was discovered by which hides could be tanned far more economically and expeditiously than by the use of bark. Of course the tanner-

ies were then soon abandoned, and bark had no longer any market value. Almost simultaneously it was discovered that the Catskill Mountains and their foot-hills were a pretty continuous and solid mass of stone deposited in layers which adapted them for paving-stone. The purchase and transportation of this stone at length supplanted pretty much all other kinds of business at Malden.

While my father conducted the business of his farm, store, and sloops, he and his family lived almost exclusively upon the produce of his farm and garden. He kept cows, horses, poultry, pigs, oxen and sheep, and he raised all the fruit and vegetables and grain which were consumed in the stables or in the house, besides raising quite a surplus for sale. The stream of which I have spoken of as passing through the swamp lot operated a grist mill about two miles off, where our corn and wheat were carried to be ground, and from it were made the bread consumed in the family, and the "stir-about" for the pigs and chickens and cows and turkeys and hogs. Of these latter we usually killed from six to eight in December, and the impression which that slaughter left upon my youthful mind was far more profound than any account I have yet read or heard of the carnage at the siege of Santiago.

There were no butchers in those days to bring

us meat, nor shops from which to buy it. It could only be had from a farmer here and there who chanced to raise a little more stock than he required for his own use, or was brought from New York.

Immediately following the hog-killing came the making of sausages. First the meat had to be chopped in large wooden bowls. This was a process in which we were sometimes permitted to take a hand. When finished their long links were taken to the garret and hung across cords, high above the reach of rats and mice or the heads of visitors, where before the following morning they were frozen solid. From that time until March, every morning one or more of these frozen links were very sure to be sent for, put into the frying-pan, and of these, with cakes from buckwheat grown on the place, flavored with the gravy from the sausage instead of butter usually, and made yet more toothsome by the good old-fashioned New Orleans molasses, the like of which has not been seen now for many years, with a cup of very weak coffee, we made our breakfast. I say that no such molasses has been seen for many years, for the modern process of extracting the sugar from the cane-juice impoverishes it to such a degree that the molasses is not at all like what was used in those days, and is otherwise unfit for the table.

Soon after the hog-killing came the time for making candles. We had no electric lights, no gas, no oil even, but every family who had the material for it was accustomed to make the candles which they required and depended upon, for artificial light. That process was always a very interesting one to me, and needs to be explained to enable the readers of this generation to understand how much families had to do to secure one of the greatest comforts of life for which they now are required only to touch a button.

Our kitchen was the largest room in the house. The fireplace was so large that it would take a log of a length and weight requiring at least two men to lift. There was no stove coal used or even known to exist in the whole United States, so far as I know, at that time. Wood and corn-cobs were the only fuel which I had then ever seen used. Corn-cobs were used chiefly by us for smoking the hams cut from our hogs; and for that service a little house was built apart from the main building sufficiently large to hang and smoke fifteen or twenty hams at a time, the smoke of burning cobs being thought to give the hams a special flavor.

When candles were to be made, a great iron caldron was first provided, capable of holding eight or ten gallons. This was filled to a proper extent with tallow taken from the animals and

put over the fire until its contents were melted. Meanwhile a bundle of smooth, straight sticks, about two and a half feet long and about as thick as one's largest finger, had been provided, on which all the female part of the household was engaged in tying strands of wicking about fourteen inches in length, about two inches apart one from the other; and when all the sticks were wicked each one in turn was taken up by the projecting end of the stick left without wicking to serve as a handle, and dipped into the caldron of tallow to the length of the wick, immediately taken out and restored to its place on two rails which had been placed in the kitchen for the temporary support of the wicks to be developed into candles. As soon as the tallow on the wick had become hard, it was dipped in again, and when that became hard the process was repeated, and so on until the candle had attained satisfactory proportions. This process was pursued, of course, with all the bewicked sticks, and there were usually in the kitchen four or five pairs of rails its whole length to support these wicks, just separate enough from each other to admit of the passage of the attendants. The part of the wick by which the candle was supported on the sticks was not submerged in the tallow, and when the candles were finished and hard—they were generally left over night for that purpose on the sticks—

they were slipped off of the sticks, clipped at the end to make them easier to light, and then put away in boxes for use.

I remember when my father sent home from New York a pair of glass lamps with wicks and oil for them, the event made a far greater sensation in our household than the introduction of electric light at The Squirrels nearly seventy years later.

I must not omit to tell you that all the candles that I ever saw made in my father's house were made by my mother, my elder sister, the one female servant at that time attached to our household, and such aid from the farm-hands as was required for handling, heating, and filling the caldron.

In those days I do not recollect to have seen a cake of hard soap in our house, except what my father used for shaving. We made all of our soap for laundry and all other purposes, so far as I can recollect. There stood in the woodshed a large cask of about the capacity of a hogshead, but about twice as large in circumference at the top as at the bottom. This was filled with wood ashes from our own fireplaces. We made no other kind. Into this cask a pail of water was poured several times a day, which, after percolating through the ashes, came out at a spigot in the bottom of the cask as lye. This lye was then thrown into another cask which

had been gradually filling for many weeks perhaps with the fat that came from the bullocks and pigs not otherwise consumed in the house. I think this mixture was subjected in some way to a high temperature, and its impure ingredients which rose to the surface were skimmed off. The result was what was known in those days as "soft soap." It was not until some years later that hard soap was used in our house or in the neighborhood for laundry purposes.

Most of the bedclothing of the family was made in the house. My father usually kept a flock of from thirty to fifty sheep. Their wool was spun into yarn by the females of the household, and then sent out to be woven into blankets and cloths. From the wool thus woven all our flannel underclothing was also made. Our undershirts were dyed at home with coloring matter extracted from the goldenrod which it was the business of us youngsters to gather in its season. The every-day suit of clothes which I wore when I went first from home to school in Troy was made from this cloth by a tailor brought into the house for the purpose. My youngest sister went to school in a dress made of cloth woven from goldenrod-colored yarn. All our stockings were knit in the family, and mine invariably came to the knees.

The cellar was, as it were, the very stomach of the house. In one corner was a large bin

with about the capacity of the hall room of a twenty-five foot New York house, that was pretty nearly filled with potatoes taken from the garden; and these not only supplied the family until the new potatoes came in, in the following July, but it also furnished seed for planting three or four acres in the spring, besides much most welcome nourishment for the pigs. It used to be our duty to pick out from time to time in the course of the winter all the potatoes smaller than a hen's egg, and they were thrown into the large caldron I have told about, holding eight or ten gallons, and sufficient water added to boil them in. When properly cooked they were thrown into a large barrel, mixed with corn-meal, and distributed to the pigs at discretion.

Next to the potatoes were bins piled up, one with turnips, another with pumpkins, others with cabbages, beets, carrots, and whatever other winter vegetables the garden for the season afforded. The potatoes were carefully covered with straw to exclude the light, which, if allowed to fall upon them, gradually made them bitter and unfit to eat.

In another corner of the cellar was usually collected what to us seemed a mountain of apples, of various sorts, which occasionally we were told to look over, to pick out any that were decaying. There were also stored there four

or five barrels of cider which had been made in September and October, and two or three barrels of vinegar, and as many barrels of pork. In the garret, I must not forget to mention, the floor for about ten feet square was strewn with hickory nuts about four inches deep, and beside them another square of the same dimensions covered to about the same thickness with butter-nuts, all collected from the farm. On winter evenings when a visitor came in, whether for social or business purposes, and often at other times, one of us boys or more were sent down into the cellar to bring up a basket of apples, a capacious pitcher of cider, and then to the garret for some nuts. From the wood piled up for the night near by we selected a hickory log sawed at one end, which we stood up between our legs as we sat on the floor and cracked the nuts. We did our share also in eating their contents. My father was fully entitled to the highest compliment that country people in those days knew how to pay to a good husband—he was a good provider.

We were fortunate enough to have no physician living within two miles of us, and he was not so dangerous as to make us afraid of him. He had, so far as I recollect, but two weapons with which to kill or cure—the lancet to bleed with, and calomel to cure any other complaints for which bleeding would not answer. He vac-

culated us, when I presume he injected into my constitution the only poison with which it has ever had to contend. I do not remember to have been sick during my childhood but once, and then my brother and I had what was called *erysipelas*, or measles, probably a result of the vaccination. We sent for no doctor, but I recollect the occasion rather as a holiday than otherwise. My mother spread a sheet on the kitchen floor, and by the side of it placed a large wooden bowl filled with corn-meal which we threw over the parts that itched, instead of scratching, which she discouraged. I had no other consciousness of being ill than the itching which I managed in that way to relieve, and within a day or two we were again at school.

Our doctor, whenever he came to see us or any one in the village, rode upon a little, old, white horse, astride of a pair of saddle-bags containing all the tools which he required or had learned the use of. Hence the members of his profession were not infrequently though irreverently referred to by the vulgar, not as the doctor, but as "the saddle-bags."

Over the kitchen fireplace had been built in the wall a closet about four feet high by two feet broad. In this my mother kept all the little nostrums, mostly herbs, which she thought she had found useful in dealing with the physical ailments of her family. One day, curious to

know what this closet contained, I rashly climbed up on the high back of an old-fashioned chair to look into it. While gratifying my curiosity, I disturbed the balance of my chair, and down I came, striking the side of my head on an andiron close to my left eye. The cut was a pretty severe one, and the scar from it was visible for more than thirty years.

Near to the store my father had what was called "the shipyard," where were built and repaired sloops for himself and others. When the workmen went to their dinners they were apt to leave their tools where they had been working. One day I was playing around in this yard—I fancy I must have been barefooted—while the men were absent, and one of my big toes struck against the blade of a broadax with which some of the workmen had been hewing timber. It nearly deprived me of that toe, but not quite; it hung down, and there seemed to be nothing to do with it but cut it off. However, I was taken home, and my mother put the toe again in its place, bandaging it up with a linen rag on which she pasted some balsam taken from a tree which grew near the house and which was always relied upon for the healing of all kinds of wounds. The toe rapidly healed up, and I was hopping about again as usual in a few days, but the toe never quite resumed its former shape, though it has since, so far as I

know, always toed the mark as faithfully as any of its colleagues. As it was not until more than half a century later that physicians were received at court in England, perhaps this lack of reverence for the faculty came over to us with the common law. In neither of these cases did my mother invoke the resources of "the saddlebags."

I have said that my parents were Presbyterians. They were more than that: they were New England Presbyterians. They were more than that: they were Connecticut Presbyterians, and they meant to be just as good as a Connecticut Presbyterian can be. They were very strict about keeping the Sabbath. They ordinarily commenced their Sabbath Saturday afternoon, and not infrequently tried to make us remember that the Sabbath had commenced before our half-holiday had expired. They were not ascetical at all; on the contrary, they were always cheerful and sensible. They had, however, been brought up to distrust the influence of worldly pleasures and to estimate the moral efficacy of self-denial at a much higher figure than their own—or anybody else's—children ever did.

The first church I ever attended was the Lutheran Church at a place about two miles back from the river called Kaatsban. It was built of stone before the Revolution by the

Hollanders, who with their descendants, constituted the majority of the population in Ulster County at the time of which I am speaking. The bread of life was broken to them by a venerable-looking pastor with a remarkably high and voluminous white cravat around his neck, who was in the habit of preaching one Sunday in Low Dutch, and the next in the English language. Unfortunately for him, he chose to exert his influence, which was pretty absolute among the Dutch members of his flock, to oppose the charter of a turnpike road which should shorten the distance considerably between the river at father's landing and the tanneries in the mountains. My father was discouraged by this conduct from attending the church any more, and of course from contributing toward its support, and incontinently set to work to induce his brothers-in-law to unite with him in building a church in Malden. This was soon accomplished, and the Rev. John N. Lewis of Brooklyn was the first pastor. He was a son-in-law of Colonel Edwards, who at that time was the largest tanner of hides in the mountains, and a connection of the famous Jonathan Edwards of Northampton, Massachusetts. There was usually a service three times a day on Sunday which we youngsters were obliged to attend, besides a prayer-meeting in the middle of the week, not to mention other occasional

ceremonies. Of the preaching in that church, and of the religious instruction which was impressed upon me in those days, I only remember what were supposed to be the terrible consequences of a sinful life, and the implacable nature of God. I do not remember to have ever heard His attributes presented in a way to inspire any other emotion than of fear for what He might do to me. As that kind of theology was entirely acceptable to the chief supporters of the church, of course I supposed it was all right; but I never took to it much.

Before the church was built, and when for any reason we did not attend church in the afternoon, it was pretty uniformly one of my duties to read to my mother a chapter from Scott's Family Bible; and his Commentary upon it, which was usually several times longer than the chapter, and to me of course much less intelligible. This was dull work for me because I never received from what I read of the Commentaries a single shadow even of an idea. But the trial, as most trials in this world, was mitigated to me in some degree. I don't think my dear mother understood or at least took much more interest in the Commentary than I did, and it was with great pleasure that I would see her frequently, after I had read awhile, gradually close her eyes and fall off into a refreshing slumber, when I as quietly as possible

joined my brothers. For that she never rebuked me, God bless her. On other occasions when sweet sleep refused to come to my relief, I would occasionally skip a paragraph, and, by dint of sundry judicious selections of skipable passages, would manage to shorten the doctor's Commentary, always without in the least impairing my good mother's faith in its logic or theology. Sometimes instead of the Bible it was "The Four-fold State" or the *New York Observer* that I was required to read. I do not remember the time when father began to take in that paper, but it was never stopped during his lifetime nor until the Civil War broke out, when its sympathies with the Confederates compelled the Malden remnant of the family to substitute for it the *New York Evangelist*.

Speaking of our Sunday exercises I may here mention a first experience of mine when I was about seven years old. My father was in the habit in those days of smoking a cigar after dinner on Sunday in his own bedroom. I do not remember seeing him smoke on any other day. Over the mantel of the fireplace in that room, as over the mantel in the kitchen, was a closet let into the wall. In that closet he kept among other odd things a box of cigars. One Sunday afternoon my brother David and I were sitting by his side in front of the fire while he was reading the *New York Observer* to him-

self and smoking. Brother David, with an audacity which surprised me, reached up to that closet and took out of the box two cigars, proceeded to light one by a coal from the fire and then handed the other cigar to me with a light. I looked at father, thinking that he might have something to say about this experiment of ours, but he affected, I think now, not to see what was going on. We were both very soon pulling away at our cigars with the zeal of all beginners, and so much absorbed was I in the new sensations we were experiencing that I did not notice till my cigar was half burned out that Brother David had left the room. About the same time I began to experience unusual sensations which seemed to require sympathy; and I got up and went out, partly to look him up, but more immediately to find my way to the pantry, where I tasted by turns everything on the premises in the hope of getting the nasty taste of the cigar out of my mouth. I tried about everything there that had a taste, but the only thing that gave me even a momentary satisfaction was smoked beef. But that was only momentary. Meantime I grew pale and faint, and was rapidly reaching the point when life was to my mind ceasing to be worth living. Finally I decided to give up the search for my brother, to seek no more relief in the pantry, and to get up to our bedroom as speedily as

possible: not that I wanted to sleep, but that I did not feel any longer able to stand. I crawled up the stairs and stole into the room, when what was my surprise to find my brother already there, groaning and uttering all the imprecations against tobacco that were in any respect suitable for use on the Sabbath day.

His experience with his first cigar was profitable to him, for it cured him of any taste for tobacco for the rest of his life. It cured me also for many years, but I regret to say not for quite so long a time.

The year following my return from Sharon, my brother and I were sent again to the village school, and here I may say my scholastic education practically began—and I was near saying, practically ended—though I subsequently spent two years at the academy in Troy, and four years in two different colleges. I never had such profitable instruction from any teachers as I received in my two years in this village school. Our teacher—his name was Woodburn—was an enthusiast in his profession; and no one, I think, ever sought more zealously to acquire knowledge for himself than this man sought to put knowledge into the heads of his pupils. He would come over to our house in the winter evenings and read to us Rollin's History until we were obliged to go to bed, and later got in the habit of appearing at the house

before daylight in the morning, and calling us to get out of bed, and come down to be crammed for our lessons. At last I remembered my sister interfered, and said that I should not be called so early in the morning; it was making me ill. Her interference broke up these matutinal visits, but at the school every pupil felt the effect of his assiduity. I began Latin with him, and I remember the special privilege which he extended to myself and one of my cousins, Samuel, the oldest brother of Cousin William Isham, of letting us, when the weather was fine, take our grammar out under the trees in the adjacent woods. We were learning, I remember, the different conjugations of the verbs. Mr. Woodburn would give us a verb, and tell us as soon as we had learned it to come in and recite it to him; and before the year was out, I don't think there was a regular verb or many irregular ones in our Latin grammar that I could not conjugate forwards and backwards as readily as I can now say our alphabet.

In those days, too, great attention was given to spelling, an art sadly neglected in these days. We had spelling lessons every day, but on Saturday forenoons we always had a spelling match. Our school consisted, as nearly as I remember, of about an equal number of boys and girls—thirty to forty in all. We were arranged in a line from one end of the school-room to the

other, according to our rank as spellers. The teacher then put out a word to us from a dictionary, and if the boy at the head of the class could not spell it, it was given to the next, and so on until the pupil was found who could spell it correctly, and then the victor took the place in the class occupied by the one who first failed; and between the excitement of getting up in the class, and the mortification of having the girls spell words that we couldn't spell, and the novelty of the game, so different from other class studies, it caused the mistakes and failures in spelling to leave a profound impression upon our minds; and I venture to say that none of the children who were exercised in that class were ever during their lifetime caught misspelling words in common use.

Happily for us, the district schools in those days received no aid from the State. The district raised the money among themselves in some way, and selected their teacher and paid him according to the number of pupils that they sent to the school. The position of teacher had not yet become the football of politicians; and teachers were not selected with a view of giving a living to a worthless dependent, but exclusively with a view to securing the best instruction that the people could afford. In those days such teachers came mostly from New England, as Woodburn did.

We used to be let out of school for ten minutes, perhaps twice during the forenoon, and twice during the afternoon, and the amount of playing that we managed to do during those ten minutes is almost incredible. One of the amusements that I remember most distinctly is climbing large trees in the adjoining forest, crawling out on the branches, and the more daring of us hanging with our legs crossed over the branches and our heads down, and at other times getting out to the ends of the branches until they would bend down, and then dropping from them to the ground. Those were thought to be great feats, and no accidents ever happened from them during my time.

The school-house was on the top of the hill, and there was a gradual grade to the river; and it was one of the chief resources in winter to start with our sleds from the top, and go almost the whole distance without stopping, fully a quarter of a mile.

In the winter-time our journey to school would be thought by children nowadays a pretty difficult one, and often constituted an ample excuse for staying at home. The snow was often quite deep and would sometimes drift so high as to hide the fences. I do not remember to have ever thought of staying at home from school on account of the weather, though the school-house was fully three-quarters of a

mile from our house, nor of ever esteeming it in the least a hardship or anything but a pleasure to go. I never had on my feet a pair of over shoes until eight or ten years after that time and of course by the time I reached school my shoes in winter were full of snow, and I may say in many instances the rest of my clothing, for we never passed another boy, nor a man either, if we could help it, without snowballing him, and being snowballed in return.

It is strange to see how early the opposite sexes attract each other. I could not have been more than nine years of age when I was attracted by a little girl at our district school whose mother had just settled in our village. She was what any child of that age who is in comfortable circumstances would be—unsophisticated and healthy, nothing more—but her dress was nice and she looked altogether well cared for and a little out of the ordinary in her attire. I remember, the morning succeeding that on which she appeared at the school, putting on all my Sunday clothes (for in those days there were nothing but Sunday dress and school dress) and coming to breakfast. My mother remarked the change immediately and said: "Why, John, what have you been doing?" Of course I had no answer to make.

"Go up at once and take those clothes off."

I don't remember what I did exactly, but I don't believe her tone and manner were imperious enough for the emergency.

Our village never wasted, or, if you please, improved, much time in what are commonly regarded as amusements. It was hardly a joke to say that the principal gayety of the neighborhood was an occasional funeral; and yet our domestic circle was always happy and cheerful and contented. The only event toward which I can remember my father to have deliberately contributed, of which amusement was the only end and purpose, was to give Brother David a shilling or two, and let him take me with him to Saugerties on foot two miles off to a circus which had just arrived. We got off in the morning as soon as we had done the chores ("chars"). We did not let the grass grow till we got to the circus, and between the elephant and the lion and the monkeys, the day flew by—only half of it, however, on angel wings; for, after paying for our admission, what was left for refreshments was not sufficient to make any sensible impression upon our appetites. Still we held on until near sundown, so fascinated were we with this, our first opportunity, of studying the habits of beasts of prey.

Neither do I recollect my parents ever making to us children during that period of my life any presents, as such. I managed somehow to

get playthings—sleds and knives and things that boys must have—but I had in some way or another to get them myself. My want of them was never anticipated; and yet no one ever had kinder parents.

Thanksgiving was a feast-day. We always heard a sermon at church in the morning, and then at dinner had all the family and as many of the collateral relations in the neighborhood as could come, with the parson and his family. Our dinner was uniformly of the standard New England Thanksgiving dinner type, of which a turkey, mince, apple, and pumpkin pies were as sure to be there as the parson and his family. Quilting-matches and corn huskings for the young and tea fights for the elders were the nearest to anything like systematic gayety that was considered good form in Malden. A proposition to dance, or even to learn to dance, would have ruined the reputation of the individual who propounded it.

Among the Presbyterians in those days Christmas was not regarded as a first-class holiday. It was solemnized by no religious exercises. It was regarded as savoring a little of Romanism. However, we always had a family gathering on the day if the weather permitted. The only incident connected with those holidays which I can recall was the arrival of a cousin, quite grown up, and who was dressed

in the height of fashion for that community, and having on what I do not remember to have ever seen before—a pair of white woolen pantaloons. We had in those days a favorite black watch-dog, who was worth on such a place as ours nearly as much as a man, so intelligent was he. For some reason which the dog never explained, he didn't take to this young gentleman when he approached the house. Perhaps he thought him overdressed. At all events he sought to prevent his entering by seizing him by the trousers. As the cousin was determined to go on, it resulted in tearing his trousers from his hip nearly to his feet. He came in, of course, very indignant at what had occurred, and mortified, no doubt, at missing the effect which he had anticipated from the perfection of his toilet. I remember, so wicked was I then, that his misfortune was mitigated to us in a very considerable degree by the reputation which the young man had earned in that pious community of being somewhat too gay and festive in his make-up.

In saying that we never received any presents strictly as presents, I perhaps have made an overstatement. On Christmas Eve we always hung up our stockings—at first by the side of the fireplace, and later on the bedposts.

Of course before daylight we were up looking for our stockings, and we always found them

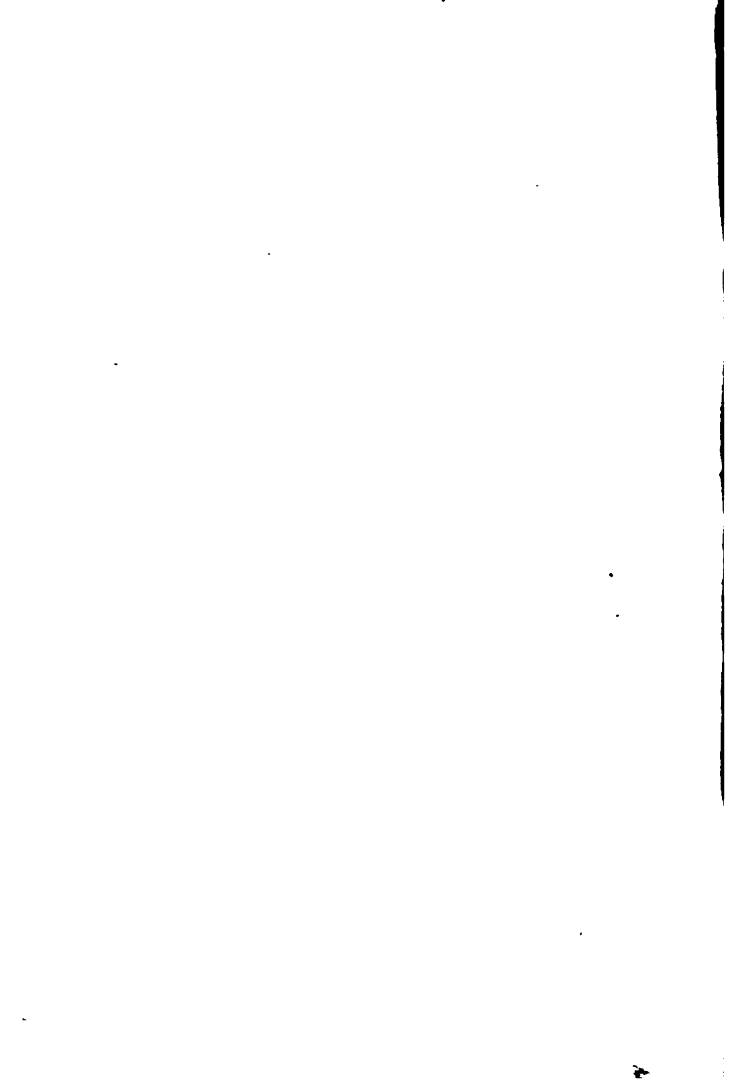
crammed with something—usually things to eat: candies, nuts, oranges, apples, etc.

In those days the only mail we received came by stage up from New York to Albany one day, down the next. We had no daily mail; a steamboat had just begun to run, but it passed by on the opposite side of the river, and had not yet been employed by the Government as a postal agency. Correspondence by mail in those days was comparatively expensive; the postage between New York and Albany varied between one and sixpence and two shillings, or eighteen and twenty-five cents.

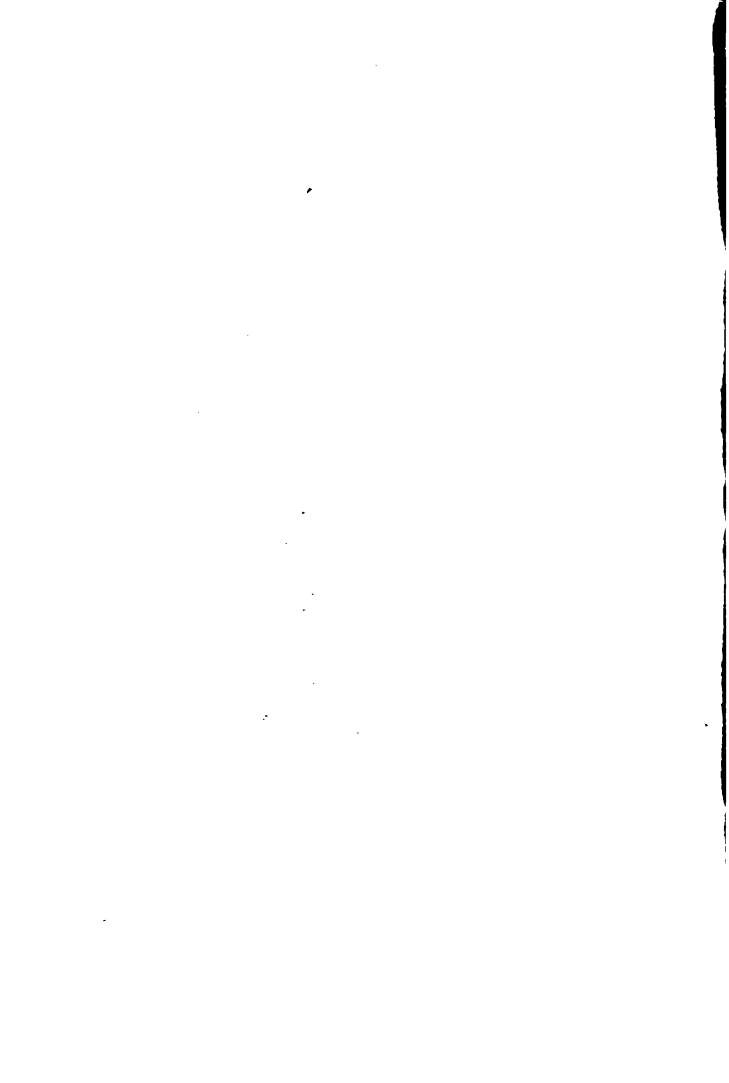
In 1824, and when I was still young enough to care nothing about it, Lafayette revisited this country for the last time and was received with public honors. On the opposite side of the Hudson River from Malden was what was known as the Livingston Manor, and almost immediately opposite my father's house was the residence of Edward Livingston, and only a few rods below, that of Chancellor Robert Livingston, who had been Secretary of State and Minister to France. The latter invited Lafayette to visit them, and he was brought up in a steamboat—one of the three first built on the river. It bore the name of *Chancellor Livingston*, who had been the patron and friend in need of Robert Fulton, who planned and constructed the first vessel propelled by steam that ever

vexed the waters of the Hudson River. It was attended by a large number of sailing vessels, and crowds of people, most of them coming all the way from New York. My father in those days had a sloop called the *Phoenix*, rather celebrated among the river boatmen for her speed. He rigged out this vessel with all the flags he had or could borrow in the town, and invited all the grown people of the neighborhood, without distinction of sex or color, to sail over with him to the fête.

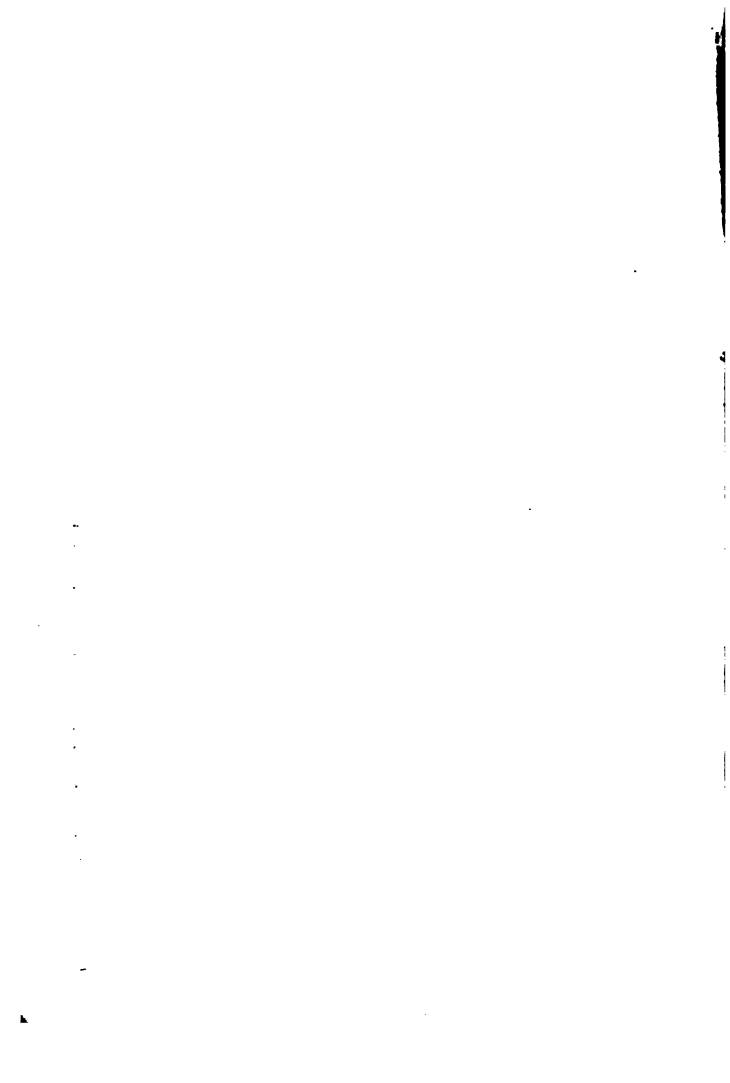
I remember watching the *Phoenix* from our garden as she crossed, her deck black with people, and comforting myself for the lack of an invitation to join the party, under a peach tree which I that morning discovered for the first time had some fruit already ripe for my entertainment. I am bound to say that I took a far livelier interest in those peaches than I did in Mr. Lafayette or his party, for I have never since tasted better peaches than I thought them to be. The enemies of the peach had not yet discovered the North River.



PLAYERS'



ADELAIDE RISTORI
(1821-1906)



ADELAIDE RISTORI

A CONSCIENTIOUS ARTIST

THE following pages are inspiring—revealing, as they do, the young artist's contempt for a merely popular success and her conscientious determination to strive without ceasing to improve her art in order that it might deserve the approval of the discriminating critic:

*When twelve years old I was booked with the famous actor and manager, Giuseppe Moncalvo, for the rôles of a child. Soon after, owing to my slender figure, they made me up as a little woman, giving me small parts as maid. But they soon made up their minds that I was not fitted for such parts. Having reached the age of thirteen and developed in my figure, I was assigned several parts as second lady! In those days they could not be too particular in small companies. At the age of fourteen, I had to recite the first part among the young girls and that of the leading lady alternately, like an experienced actress. It was about this time,

* From "Memoirs and Artistic Studies of Adelaide Ristori," by G. Mantellini. Doubleday, Page & Co., 1907.

in the city of Novara (Piedmont), that I recited for the first time the "Francesca da Rimini" of Silvio Pellico. Though I was only fifteen, my success was such that soon afterward they offered me the parts of leading lady with encouragement of advancement.

My good father, who was gifted with a great deal of sense, did not allow his head to be turned by such offers. Reflecting that my health might suffer from being thrown so early into the difficulties of stage life he refused these offers and accepted a more modest place, as *ingénue*, in the Royal Company, under the auspices of the King of Sardinia and stationed during several months of the year at Turin. It was managed by the leading man, the most intelligent and capable among the stage managers of the time. The advice of this cultured, though severe, man, rendered his management noteworthy and was sought after as essential to the making of a good actor.

Among the members of the company shone the foremost beacon-lights of Italian art, such as Vestri, Madame Marchionni, Romagnoli, Righetti, and many others who were quoted as examples of dramatic art, as well as Pasta, Malibran, Rubini, and Tamburini in the lyric art.

My engagement for the part of *ingénue* was to have lasted three years, but, after the year, I

was promoted to the parts of the first lady, and in the third year to the absolute leading lady.

To such unhopèd-for and flattering results I was able to attain, by ascending step by step through the encouragement and admonition of my excellent teacher, Madame Carlotta Marchionni, a distinguished actress, and the interest of Gaetano Bazzi who also had great affection for me. It was really then that my artistic education began. It was then that I acquired the knowledge and the rules which placed me in a position to discern the characteristics of a true artist. I learned to distinguish and to delineate the comic and the dramatic passions. My temperament caused me to incline greatly toward the tender and the gentle. However, in the tragic parts, my vigour increased. I learned to portray transitions for the sake of fusing the different contrasts; a capital but difficult study of detail, tedious at times, but of the greatest importance. The lamentations in a part where two extreme and opposing passions are at play, are like those which in painting are called "chiaro-oscuro," a blending of the tones, which thus portrays truth devoid of artifice.

In order to succeed in this intent, it is necessary to take as model the great culture of art, and also to be gifted with a well-tempered and artistic nature. And these are not to be confined to sterile imitation, but are for the purpose

of accumulating the rich material of dramatic erudition, so that one may present one's self before the audiences as an original and artistic individuality.

Some people think that distinction of birth and a perfect education will render them capable of appearing upon the stage with the same facility and nonchalance with which one enters a ball-room, and they are not at all timid about walking upon the boards, presuming that they can do it as well as an actor who has been raised upon them. A great error!

One of the greatest difficulties that they meet is in not knowing how to walk upon a stage, which, owing to the slight inclination in construction, easily causes the feet to totter, particularly if one is a beginner, and especially at the entrances and exits. I myself encountered this difficulty. Though I had dedicated myself to the art from my infancy and had been instructed with the greatest care every day of my life by my grandmother, at the age of fifteen my movements had not yet acquired all the ease and naturalness necessary to make me feel at home upon the stage, and certain sudden turns always frightened me.

When I began my artistic apprenticeship, the use of diction was given great importance, as a means of judging an actor. At that time the audience was critical and severe.

In our days the same audience has become less exacting, less critical, and does not aim to improve the artist by counting his defects. According to my opinion, the old system was best, as it is not in excessive indulgence and solely by considering the good qualities without correcting the bad ones that real artists are made.

It is also my conviction that a person who wishes to dedicate himself to the stage should not begin his career with parts of great importance, either comic, dramatic, or tragic. The interpretation becomes too difficult for a beginner and may harm his future career: first, the discouragement over the difficulties that he meets; secondly, an excessive vanity caused by the appreciation with which the public apparently honours him. Both these sentiments will lead the actor, in a short time, to neglect his study. On the other hand, by taking several parts he becomes familiar with the means of rendering his part natural, thus convincing himself that by representing correctly characters of little importance he will be given more important ones later on. Thus it will come about that his study will be more careful.

But let me return to my narrative.

By the year 1840 my reputation as absolute leading lady was established. I had reached the desired goal, not without having struggled

against the greatest obstacles. But I was in love with my art, and it was by meeting obstacles that I was gaining new strength.

Fatigue never discouraged me. So great was my passion for the stage that when my manager granted me an evening's rest for the sake of saving my strength and also with the cunning object of causing the public to desire my presence the more, I felt like a fish out of water. I did my best to take advantage of that free evening by employing it in the study of some new and difficult part. I applied myself to it passionately, with the greatest possible enthusiasm; but when the hour of the performance struck, a sort of restlessness would take hold of me which I wasn't able to quiet. I seemed to hear the first notes of the orchestra, the impatient murmur of the audience, and the exhilarating uproar of the applause. Then I would walk up and down the room with long strides, endeavouring to distract my mind, and repeating from memory some lines which I had studied—but in vain! Irritated by not succeeding in accomplishing anything, I would suddenly enter my mother's room, exclaiming, "Shall we go to the theatre to spend an hour?" "Let us go," she would answer, "if you cannot keep away from it!" Quickly we would don our wraps and hats and be off. Having reached the theatre, I was often overcome by my gay humour, and

would think of all sorts of pranks to play upon my fellow-actors. I remember on one of those evenings they were playing "Le Memorie del Diavolo," in which many masqueraders appeared at a certain moment of the play. The caprice seized me to go upon the stage among the supernumeraries as a surprise to the leading man. It was useless to attempt to dissuade me from that roguish trick. To don a domino and cover my face with a half-mask was but the matter of a minute. I went on the stage with the supernumeraries. At the stroke of twelve they all had to unmask. You may imagine what ugly looks the leading man gave me upon noticing my presence. But I was motionless, suppressing my laughter and not at all discountenanced. The audience, having noticed the joke, broke into loud applause. Observing that my fellow-actor was getting angry I hid myself among the supernumeraries standing around me and succeeded in withdrawing from the eyes of all. Asking forgiveness from my good companion—which I readily obtained—I convinced him that I had entered into that escapade in fun.

However, my mood was not always gay. Often I was downcast by inexplicable sadness which, lying like a piece of lead upon my heart, filled my mind with sad thoughts. I think that this strange uneasiness of temperament was

to be attributed entirely to the excessive emotions which I experienced when playing certain passionate parts.

I interpreted so realistically the parts I took that even my health became affected. One evening when I was playing "Adrienne Lecouvreur," the tension of nerves and mind during that last act of delirious passion was so great that when the curtain dropped at the end of the drama I was assailed by a sort of nervous attack, and experienced in my brain a drowsiness so that I lost consciousness for a period of fifty minutes.

When I was under the influence of similar emotions, a sense of melancholia would take hold of me. Then I would love a walk to the cemetery. I would remain a long time within that peaceful enclosure, stopping from time to time to read the inscriptions over the various tombs, and I was moved to pity, even to tears, if I came upon the tomb of a young girl taken in the bloom of life from desolate parents, and adoring husband, or from her children, and I would return home with my spirit extremely grieved. Often as soon as I had arrived in a new town and visited the picture and sculpture galleries, I contrived to obtain permission to visit the insane asylum. When it was not the cemetery, it was there that the impulse of the moment would carry me. Demented young girls were those

who attracted my sympathy, and if their sad, tranquil forms of insanity permitted me to enter their cells, I would entertain myself with them; and they had a special love for me, making me the confidante of their sacred griefs! It is true that very often I heard the same old story—Treachery! Abandonment!

With the passing of years I succeeded in outgrowing such eccentricities. By mastering my nerves I freed myself from those romantic ideas, and nothing could distract me from my studies. . . .

The years of my youth rolled by in the pursuit of my professional career while my love for learning never grew any less. On the contrary, while advancing in age I was greatly improving in my artistic vocation. That nature had designed me for the dramatic art, I could feel from the eager desire urging me to observe and acquire all that was shown to me, through my professional peregrinations. Music, painting, and sculpture had always had for me a fascinating attractiveness. I will quote an example. One night in Florence, being worn out with fatigue owing to several successive performances, I was longing for a day of rest. However, such a welcome relief did not suit the manager of the Cocomero Theatre, Signor Somigli, who was not inclined to interrupt the profitable run of the performances of "Pia de' Tolomei," which had

met with great public favour, and swelled the cash receipts.

The greedy manager called to his assistance his brother, who remembered a desire which I had previously expressed and conceived the idea of striking me in my vulnerable spot. Coming to me, he said, "Please do play again to-morrow night and you will get a fine present."

"I don't care for your presents," I answered, laughing.

"Still," he added; "if you knew! . . . Do you remember that beautiful drawing of the façade of our famous San Miniato al Monte you so much admired when in my house? If you will play, it is yours."

I could not resist and accepted. The management made another big cash receipt, while I played a whole evening for a drawing.

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Even at present, I am pleased to recollect the will-power that I always exercised, both as a young girl and as a woman, and the wise suggestions of my illustrious teacher, Madame Carlotta Marchionni.

Whenever I went upon the stage, the fear with which the audience inspired me would not abandon me for a single second. The audience might be large or small, intelligent or not, it was all the same to me. The possibility that a

single person might be there, who was intelligent and cultured enough to criticise my ability with just discernment, was sufficient to keep me from neglecting the slightest gesture.

At that time the mode of reading the lines according to the French school was in vogue, and this was carried to such an extreme that with many actors it frequently produced a tiresome cadenza. Without abandoning totally my habitual manner of reciting, which was devoid of the above-mentioned pedantry, I endeavoured to fuse that method with the Italian, because I felt that in order to improve the art of the drama it should submit to some transformations. However, I never was a servile imitator. Whether in the drama or in tragedy, I never lacked the vivacity and spontaneity of the Italian temperament. It is a part of our nature to feel the passions vividly, and, in expressing them, to be freed from academic and conventional rules. If you deprive the Italian actor of his passionate outbursts, and the real colouring of the expression, he will remain a weak and insignificant actor.

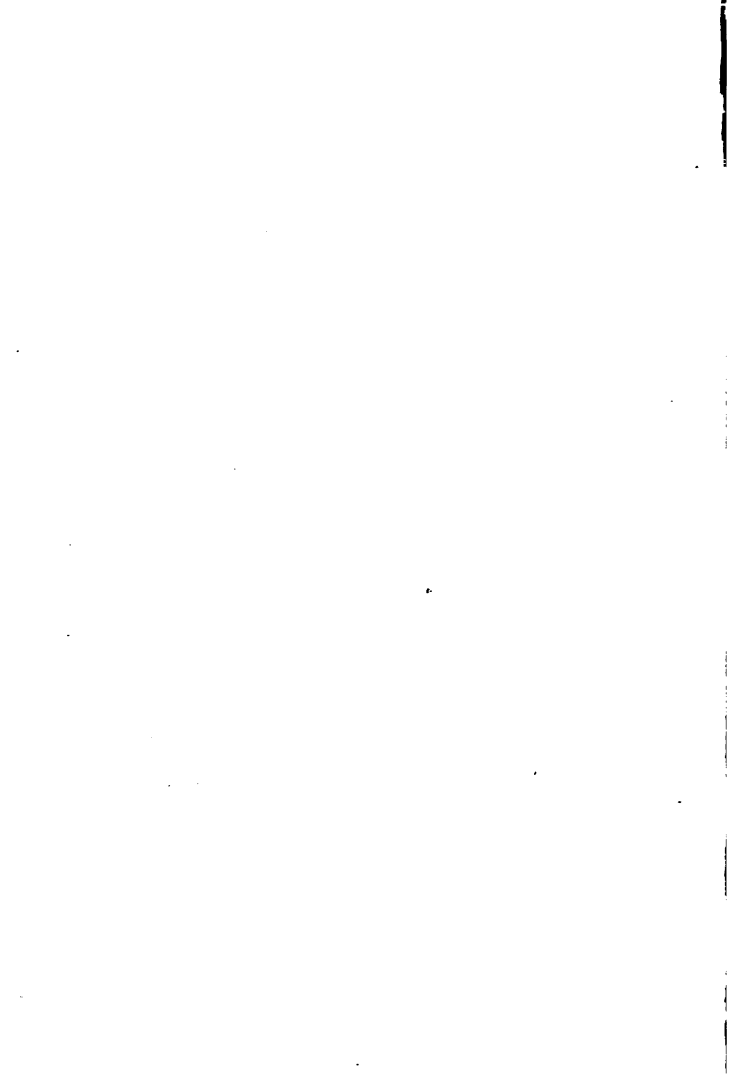
I adopted the system of a "coloured naturalness." The public remunerated me largely for my studies, as well as for my efforts to make myself worthy of so much appreciation.

Above all, my own country was generous to me, as far as lay within its power, in showing

me love and appreciation. I was delighted and carried away with exultation in feeling myself the arbiter of the stage, able to stir all the emotions of the heart, whether to tender or violent passions. I hope that the reader will forgive me such an utterance, considering that the artist lives upon the satisfaction that his long studies and hard struggles have caused him to experience. One may easily comprehend that the very recollection of having reached the goal which procured him so many exalting joys electrifies him!

When for the first time, at the age of eighteen, I was asked to play the part of Schiller's Mary Stuart, I realized, after seeing how much that great study cost me, how thorny the path which I had to tread must be if I was to succeed, as I eventually did.

CLARA MORRIS)
(1846-).



CLARA MORRIS

"GOING ON THE STAGE"

MOST girls go upon the stage simply because they are, in popular phrase, *stage-struck*. But, strangely enough, Clara Morris's chance to become an actress came to her, she considered, in direct answer to a prayer for some means of making money. She grasped the opportunity with an eager zeal which helped her natural talent to a full measure of success. The sprightly narrative which follows shows that she can write as well as act:

*I was approaching my thirteenth birthday when it came about that a certain ancient boarding-house keeper—far gone in years—required some one to assist her, some one she could trust entirely and leave in charge for a month at a time; and I, not being able to read the future, was greatly chagrined because my mother accepted the offered situation. I was always happiest when she found occupation in a house where there was a library, for people were gen-

*From "Life on the Stage," by Clara Morris. S. S. McClure Co., 1901.

erally kind to me in that respect and gave me the freedom of their shelves, seeing that I was reverently careful of all books; but in a boarding-house there would be no library, and my heart sank as we entered the gloomy old building.

No, there were no books, but among the boarders there were two or three actors and two actresses—a mother and a daughter. The mother played the “first old women”; the daughter, only a year or two older than I was, played, I was told, “walking ladies,” though what that meant I could not imagine.

The daughter (Blanche) liked me, while I looked upon her with awe, and wondered why she even noticed me. She was very wilful, she would not study anything on earth save her short parts. She had never read a book in her life. When I was home from school I told her stories by the hour, and she would say: “You ought to be in a theatre—you could act!”

And then I would be dumb for a long time, because I thought she was making fun of me. One day I was chewing some gum she gave me—I was not chewing it very nicely, either—and my mother boxed my ears, and Blanche said: “You ought to be in a theatre—you could chew all the gum you liked there!”

And just then my mother was so cruelly overworked, and the spring came in with furious heat, and I felt so big and yet so helpless—a

great girl of thirteen to be worked for by another—and the humiliation seemed more than I could bear, and I locked myself in our dreary cupboard of a room, and flung myself upon my knees, and in a passion of tears tried to make a bargain with my God! I meant no irreverence—I was intensely religious. I did not see the enormity of the act—I only knew that I suffered, and that God could help me—so I asked His help! But, instead of stopping there, I cried out to Him this promise: “Dear God! just pity me and show me what to do! Please—please help me to help my mother—and if you will, I’ll never say ‘No!’ to any woman who comes to me all my life long!”

My error in trying to barter with my Maker must have been forgiven, for my prayer was answered within a week, while there are many women scattered through the land who know that I have tried faithfully to keep my part of that bargain, and no woman who has sought my aid has ever been answered with a “No!”

One day Blanche greeted me with the news that extra ballet girls were wanted, and told me that I must go at once and get engaged.

“But,” I said, “maybe they won’t take me!”

“Well,” answered she, “I’ve coaxed your mother, and my mother says she’ll look out for you—so at any rate go and see. I’ll take you to-morrow.”

And so dimly, vaguely, I seemed to see a way opening out before me, and again behind the locked door I knelt and said: "Dear God! dear God!" and got no further, because grief has many words and joy has so few.

The school term had closed on Friday, and on Saturday morning, with my heart beating almost to suffocation, I started out to walk to the theatre with Blanche, who had promised to ask Mr. Ellsler (the manager) to take me on in the ballet. When we reached the sidewalk we saw the sky threatened rain and Blanche sent me back for an umbrella. I had none of my own, so I borrowed one from Mrs. Miller (our landlady), and at sight of it my companion broke into laughter. It was a dreadful affair—with a knobby, unkind handle, a slovenly and corpulent body, and a circumference, when open, that suggested the idea that it had been built to shelter not only the landlady, but those wise ones of the boarders who had paid up before the winds rose and the rain fell. Then we proceeded to the Old Academy of Music on Bank Street, and entering, went upstairs, and just as we reached the top step a small dark man hurried across the hall and Blanche called quickly: "Oh, Mr. Ellsler—Mr. Ellsler! wait a moment, please—I want to speak to you!"

I could not know that his almost repellent sternness of face concealed a kindness of heart

that approached weakness, so when he turned a frowning, impatient face toward us, hope left me utterly, and for a moment I seemed to stand in a great darkness. I think I can do no better than to give Mr. Ellsler's own account of that, our first meeting, as he has given it often since. He says: "I was much put out by a business matter and was hastily crossing the corridor when Blanche called me, and I saw she had another girl in tow: a girl whose appearance in a theatre was so droll I must have laughed, had I not been more than a little cross. Her dress was quite short—she wore a pale blue apron buttoned up the back, long braids tied at the ends with ribbon, and a brown straw hat, while she clutched desperately at the handle of the biggest umbrella I ever saw. Her eyes were distinctly blue and were plainly big with fright. Blanche gave her name and said she wanted to go on in the ballet, and I instantly answered she would not do, she was too small—I wanted women, not children, and started to return to my office. Blanche was voluble, but the girl herself never spoke a single word. I glanced toward her and stopped. The hands that clutched the umbrella trembled—she raised her eyes and looked at me. I had noticed their blueness a moment before—now they were almost black, so swiftly had the pupils dilated, and slowly the tears rose in them. All the

father in me shrank under the child's bitter disappointment; all the actor in me thrilled at the power of expression in the girl's face, and I hastily added: 'Oh, well! You may come back in a day or two, and if any one appears meantime who is short enough to march with you I'll take you on,' and after I got to my office I remembered the girl had not spoken a single word, but had won an engagement—for I knew I should engage her—with a pair of tear-filled eyes."

The following Tuesday, under the protection of the ever-faithful Blanche, I again presented myself and was engaged for the term of two weeks, to go on the stage in the marches and dances of a play called, "The Seven Sisters," for which service I was to receive three dollars a week, or fifty cents a night, as there were no matinées then, and so I entered, with wide, astonished eyes, into that dim, dusty, chaotic place known as "behind the scenes"—a strange place, where nothing *is* and everything *may be*.

In the daytime I found the stage a thing dead—at night, with the blazing of the gas, it lived! for light is its life, music is its soul, and the play its brain.

Silently and cautiously I walked about, gazing curiously at the "scenes," so fine on one side, so bare and cheap on the other; at the tarletan

“glass windows”; at the green “calico sea,” lying flat and waveless on the floor. Everything there pretended to be something else, and at last I said solemnly to Blanche: “Is everything only make-believe in a theatre?”

And she turned her gum to the other side and answered: “Yes, everything’s make-believe—except salary day!”

Then came the rehearsal—everything was military just then—and there was a Zouave drill to learn, as well as a couple of dances. The women and girls who had been engaged were not the very nicest people in the world, though they were the best to be found at such short notice; and Mrs. Bradshaw told me not to stand about with them, but to come to her as soon as my share in the work was over. “But,” said this wise woman, “don’t fail in politeness to them; for nothing can hold a person so far off as extreme politeness.”

To me the manual of arms was mere child’s play, and the drill a veritable delight. The second day I scribbled down the movements in the order that they had been made, and learned them by heart, with the result that on the third day I sat aside chewing gum, while the stage manager raved over the rest. Then the star—Mr. McDonough—came along and furiously demanded to know why I was not drilling. “The gentleman sent me out of the ranks, sir,”

I answered, "because he said I knew the manual and the drill!"

"Oh, indeed! well, there's not one of you that knows it—and you never will know it! You're a set of numb-skulls! Here!" he cried, catching up a rifle, "take hold of this—get up here—and let's see how much you know! Now, then, shoulder arms!"

And standing alone—burning with blushes, blinded with tears of mortification—I was put through my paces with a vengeance; but I really knew the manual as thoroughly as I knew the drill, and when it was over Mr. McDonough took the rifle from me, and exclaimed: "Well, saucer-eyes, you do know it! I'm d—d if you don't, and I'm sorry, little girl, I spoke so roughly to you!"

He held out his fat white hand to me, and as I took it he added: "You ought to stay in this business—you've got your head with you!"

It was a small matter, of course, but there was a faint hint of triumph in it, and the savor was very pleasant to me.

Naturally, with a salary of but three dollars a week, we turned to the management for our costumes. I wonder what the *danseuse* of to-day would think of the costume worn by her sister of the sixties? Now her few gauzy limb-betraying skirts reach but to the middle of the thigh; her scrap of a bodice, cut far below the shoulder-

blades at the back, being absolutely sleeveless, is precariously held in place by a string or two of beads. To be sure, she is apt to wear a collar of blazing diamonds, instead of the simple band of black velvet that used to be sufficient ornament for the peerless Bonfanti and the beautiful and modest Betty Rigl, who in their graceful ignorance of "splits" and athletic "tours de force," managed in their voluminous and knee-long skirts to whirl, to glide, to poise and float, to show, in fact, the poetry of motion.

But we, this untrained ballet, were not Bonfantis nor Morlachis, and we wore our dancing clothes with a difference. In one dance we were supposed to be fairies. We wore flesh-colored slippers and tights. It took one full week of our two weeks' engagement to learn how to secure these treacherous articles so that they would remain smooth and not wrinkle down somewhere or twist about. One girl never learned, and to the last added to the happiness of the public by ambling about on a pair of legs that looked as if they had been done up in curl papers the night before.

We each had seven white tarletan skirts, as full as they could be gathered—long enough to come a little below the knee. Our waists were also flesh-colored, and were cut fully two or three inches below our collar-bones, so you see there was plenty of cloth at our backs to hook

our very immature wings to. We had wreaths of white roses on our heads—Blanche, who was very frank, said they looked like wreaths of turnips—and garlands of white roses to wave in the dance. I remember the girl with the curled legs was loathed by all because she lassoed every one she came near with her garland—so you see we were very decorous fairies, whether we were decorative or not. Of course we were rather substantial, and our wings did seem too thin and small to sustain us satisfactorily. One girl took hers off in the dressing-room and remarked contemptuously that “they couldn’t lift her cat even!”

But another, who was dictatorial and also of a suspicious nature, answered savagely: “You don’t know nothing about wings—and you haven’t got no cat, nohow, and you know it—so shut up!” and the conversation closed.

In our second costume we were frankly human. We still wore dancing skirts, but we were in colors, and we had, of course, shed our wings—nasty, scratchy things they were, I remember. Then for the drill and march we wore the regular Fire Zouave uniform.

It was all great fun for me—you remember I was not stage-struck. Dramatically speaking, I was not yet born—I had neither ambition nor fear—I was simply happy because I was going to earn that, to me, great sum of money,

and was going to give it to my mother, and planned only what I should say to her, and had no thought at all of the theatre or anything or any person in it.

The donning of fleshings for the first time is an occasion of anxiety to any one, man or woman. I, however, approached the subject of tights with an open mind, and Blanche freely gave me both information and advice. She chilled my blood by describing the mortifying mishaps, the dread disasters these garments had brought to those who failed to understand them. She declared them to be tricky, unreliable, and malicious in the extreme.

"There's just one way to succeed with 'em," she said, "and that's by bullying 'em. Show you're afraid and they will slip and twist and wrinkle down and make you a perfect laughing-stock. You must take your time, you know, at first, and fit 'em on very carefully and smoothly over your feet and ankles and up over your knees. See that they are nice and straight or you'll look as if you were walking on corkscrews, but after that bully 'em—yank and pull and drag 'em, and when you have 'em drawn up as tight as you can draw 'em, go at 'em and pull 'em up another inch at least. They'll creak and snap and pretend they're going to tear, but don't you ever leave your dressing-room satisfied unless you feel you

can't possibly get downstairs without going sideways."

"But," I remonstrated, "they'll break and let my knees through!"

"Oh, no they won't!" she cheerfully answered. "They'll make believe they're going to split at the knee, of course, but instead they'll just keep as safe and smooth as the skin on your arm. But, for heaven's sake, don't be afraid of 'em!"

And I gravely promised to be as bold as I possibly could in my first encounter with the flesh-colored terrors.

At last the night came. Hot? Oh, my, hot it was! and we were so crowded in our tiny dressing-room that some of us had to stand on the one chair while we put our skirts on. The confusion was great, and I was glad to get out of the room, downstairs, where I went to show myself to Mrs. Bradshaw or Blanche, to see if I was all right. They looked at me, and after a hopeless struggle with their quivering faces they burst into shrieks of laughter. With trembling hands I clutched my tarletan skirts and peering down at my tights, I groaned: "Are they twisted, or run down, or what?"

But it was not the tights, it was my face. I knew you had to put on powder because the gas made you yellow, and red because powder made you ghastly, but it had not occurred to

me that skill was required in applying the same, and I was a sight to make any kindly disposed angel weep! I had not even sense enough to free my eyelashes from the powder clinging to them. My face was chalk white and low down on my cheeks were nice round bright red spots.

Mrs. Bradshaw said: "With your round blue eyes and your round white-and-red face, you look like a cheap china doll! Come here, my dear!"

She dusted off a few thicknesses of the powder, removed the hard scarlet spots, took a great soft hare's foot, which she rubbed over some pink rouge, and then holding it in the air she proceeded: "To-morrow, after you have walked to get a color, go to your glass and see where that color shows itself. I think you will find it high on your cheek, coming up close under the eye and growing fainter toward the ear. I'll paint you that way to-night on chance. You see *my* color is low on my cheek. Of course when you are making up for a character part you go by a different rule, but when you are just trying to look pretty be guided by nature. Now——"

I felt the soft touch of the hare's foot on my burning cheeks; then she gave me a toothbrush, which had black on it, and bade me draw it across my lashes. I did so and was surprised

at the amount of powder it removed. She touched her little finger to some red pomade, and said: "Thrust out your under lip—no, not like a kiss—that makes creases—make a sulky lip—so!"

She touched my lip with her finger, then she drew back and laughed again, in a different way. She drew me to the glass, and said, "Look!"

I looked and cried: "Oh—oh! Mrs. Bradshaw, that girl doesn't look a bit like me—she's ever so much nicer!"

In that lesson on making-up was the beginning and the ending of my theatrical instruction. What I have learned since then has been by observation, study, and direct inquiry—but never by instruction, either free or paid for.

Now, while I was engaged to go on with the crowd, fate willed, after all, that I should have an independent entrance for my first appearance on the stage. The matter would be too trivial to mention were it not for the influence it had upon my future. One act of the play represented the back of a stage during a performance. The scenes were turned around with their unpainted sides to the public. The scene-shifters and the gas men were standing about—everything was going wrong. The manager was giving orders wildly, and then a dancer was late. She was called frantically, and finally

when she appeared on the run, the manager caught her by the shoulders, rushed her across the stage and fairly pitched her on the imaginary stage—to the great amusement of the audience.

The tallest and prettiest girl in the ballet had been picked out to do this bit of work, and she had been rehearsed and rehearsed as if she were preparing for the balcony scene of "Romeo and Juliet"; and day after day the stage manager would groan: "Can't you run? Did you never run? Imagine the house afire and that you are running for your life!"

At last, on that opening night, we were all gathered ready for our first entrance and dance, which followed a few moments after the incident I have described. The tall girl had a queer look in her face as she stood in her place—her cue came, but she never moved.

I heard the rushing footsteps of the stage-manager: "That's you!" he shouted, "go on! go on! run!"

Run? She seemed to have grown fast to the floor. We heard the angry *aside* of the actor on the stage: "Send some one on here—for Heaven's sake!"

"Are you going on?" cried the frantic prompter.

She dropped her arms limply at her sides and whispered: "I-I-c-a-n-t!"

He turned, and as he ran his imploring eye over the line of faces, each girl shrank back from it. He reached me—I had no fear, and he saw it. “Can you go on there?” he cried. I nodded. “Then for God’s sake go!”

I gave a bound and a rush that carried me half across the stage before the manager caught me—and so I made my entrance on the stage, and danced and marched and sang with the rest, and all unconsciously took my first step upon the path that I was to follow through shadow and through sunshine—to follow by steep and stony places, over threatening bogs, through green and pleasant meadows—to follow steadily and faithfully for many and many a year to come.

On our first salary day, to the surprise of all concerned, I did not go to claim my week’s pay. To every one who spoke to me of the matter, I simply answered: “Oh, that will be all right.” When the second day came I was the last to present myself at the box-office window. Mr. Ellsler was there, and he opened the door and asked me to come in. As I signed my name on the salary list, I hesitated perceptibly and he laughingly said: “Don’t you know your own name?” Now on the first day of all, when the stage-manager had taken down our names, I had been gazing at the scenery, and when he called out: “Little girl, what is your

name?" I had not heard, and some one standing by had said: "Her name is Clara—Clara Morris, or Morrissey, or Morrison, or something like that," and he dropped the last syllable from my name Morrison, and wrote me down Morris; so when Mr. Ellsler put his question, "Don't you know your name?" that was certainly the moment when I should have spoken—but I was too shy, and there and thereafter held my peace, and have been in consequence Clara Morris ever since.

I having signed for and received my two weeks' salary, Mr. Ellsler asked why I had not come the week before, and I told him I preferred to wait because it would seem so much more if I got both weeks' all at one time. And he gravely nodded and said "it was rather a large sum to have in hand at one time"—and, though I was very sensitive to ridicule, I did not suspect him of making fun of me.

Then he said: "You are a very intelligent little girl, and when you went on alone and unrehearsed the other night you proved you had both adaptability and courage. I'd like to keep you in the theatre. Will you come and be a regular member of the company for the season that begins in September next?"

I think it must have been my ears that finally stopped my ever-widening smile while I made answer that I must ask my mother first.

"To be sure," said he, "to be sure! Well, suppose you ask her, then, and let me know whether you can or not."

Looking back and speaking calmly, I must admit that I do not now believe Mr. Ellsler's financial future depended entirely upon the yes or no of my mother and myself; but that I was on an errand of life or death every one must have thought who saw me tearing through the streets on that 90-in-the-shade summer day, racing along in a whirl of short skirts, with the boyish, self-kicking gait peculiar to running girls of thirteen.

One man, a tailor, ran out hatless and coatless and looked up the street anxiously in the direction from which I came. A big boy on the corner yelled after me: "S-a-a-y, Sis, where's the fire?" but you see they did not know that I was carrying home my first earnings, that I was clutching six damp one-dollar bills in the hands that had been so empty all my life! Poor little hands that had never held a greater sum than one big Canadian penny, that had never held a dollar bill till they had first earned it. But if the boy was blind to what I held, so was I blind to what the future held—which made us equal.

I had meant to take off my hat and smooth my hair, and in a decorous and proper manner approach my mother and deliver my nice little speech, and then hand her the money. But,

alas! as I rushed into the house I came upon her unexpectedly—for, fearing dinner was going to be late, she was hurrying things by shelling a great basket of peas as she sat by the dining-room window. At sight of her tired face all my nicely planned speech disappeared. I flung my arm about her neck, dropped the bills on top of the empty pods, and cried with beautiful lucidity: "Oh, mother! that's mine—and it's all yours!"

She kissed me, but to my grieved amazement put the money back into my hand, folding my four stiff, unwilling fingers over it, as she said: "No, you have earned this money yourself—you are the only one who has the right to use it—you are to do with it exactly as you please."

And while tears of disappointment were yet swimming in my eyes, triumph sprang up in my heart at her last words; for if I could do exactly as I pleased, why, after all, she should have the new summer dress she needed so badly. So I took the money to our room, and having secreted it in the most intricate and involved manner I could think of, I returned and laid Mr. Ellsler's offer before my mother, who at first hesitated, but learning that Mrs. Bradshaw was engaged for another season, she finally consented, and I rushed back to the theatre, where, red and hot and out of breath, I was engaged for the ballet for the next season. After this I was conscious

of a new feeling, which I would have found it very hard to explain then. It was not importance, it was not vanity, it was a pleasant feeling, it lifted the head and gave one patience to bear calmly many things that had been very hard to bear. I know now it was the self-respect that comes to every one who is a bread-winner.

RICHARD MANSFIELD
(1857-1907)



RICHARD MANSFIELD

HARDSHIPS CROWNED BY SUCCESS

LIKE Lord Byron, Richard Mansfield was the passionate and imperious son of a passionate and imperious mother. Though there may be very genuine affection between a mother and son with this temperament, they undoubtedly get on better apart—at any rate after the son has approached those which are conventionally termed the “years of discretion.” So it must have been with a feeling of relief on both sides that Mansfield said farewell to his mother, left Boston, and departed for England, ostensibly to take up the profession of painting.

In the pages which follow Mr. Wilstach describes vividly the hardships of the Bohemian life in London and tells the story of his début as Baron Chevrial, which won for him immediate recognition as a great actor:

*What intention was in his heart when Mansfield left America will never be known. The study of painting was made the excuse. If his

*From “Richard Mansfield,” by P. Wilstach. Scribner’s, 1908.

design to become a painter was sincere, it was, nevertheless, soon abandoned.

He did present his mother's letter to Frith, who received him with a formal kindness, and he studied casually at the South Kensington Museum, which he reached from the Pall Mall district, where he had lodgings, only after a weary tramp on foot. But there was lacking the enthusiasm and determination which had already become a characteristic of his genuine interest in an undertaking, and it is not surprising that the brush and palette were soon put aside and the canvases forgotten.

There was another call in his heart. Perhaps the performance of "School" and his appearance as Mr. Vincent Crummels, modest though his success was in each instance, stimulated him with a hope in a new direction. Behind him in Boston he left an unalloyed belief with his mother and his friends that his future lay with painting, but from the time he reached London it is quite evident that he was possessed with no other idea than to become an actor, and the chronicle is now one of his apprenticeship in the theatre.

His pocketbook was soon flat. It is certain, however, that there was no more perfectly tailored and groomed young gentleman on the parade than he. His acquaintance quickly extended to the leading lights of the artistic and

Bohemian world. Old Derby schoolmates looked him up. Over a modest supper, fortified with ale and Scotch, and afterward at the piano, he had a hundred resources by which to make himself fascinating. His friends brought their friends. Among a certain set of young swells Dick Mansfield's chambers became one of the most popular rallying-points in London. This hospitality soon exhausted his credit all over the neighborhood. Hunger began to pinch.

Perhaps he confided his dilemma to one or two intimates, for directly he had invitations to spend the week-ends at certain great country houses, where he sang and played for his friends and their guests after dinner. His extravagance, however, consumed the few sovereigns he could command. Nevertheless, his talents were earning him something, and he wrote of it to his mother in America with high spirits.

He was taken to the Savage Club, where his cleverness was attested by the leading entertainers of London. When Corney Grain was taken sick in the spring of 1877, Mansfield was recommended as his substitute in the German Reed Entertainments. He was to receive eight pounds a week. This was a splendid salary for any young man, as salaries went then, or as they stand now on the London stage. To Mansfield it was a windfall. . . .

As a member of this distinguished little coterie

of entertainers, Mansfield felt that his fortune was made. His whole interest, attention, and hope now centred on April 20th, the night of his début. He was assigned the small rôle of the Beadle in the comedietta, "Charity Begins at Home," which opened the evening. After that he was to change to evening dress and hold the stage alone for half an hour, after the manner established by Corney Grain. Every shilling he could scrape together went for a wardrobe—linen, boots, cravat, a boutonnière, and other irreproachable appurtenances.

His friends crowded St. George's Hall for his first appearance. It was observed as he uttered the few lines of the Beadle that he was excessively nervous. When, later in the evening, he sat down at the piano and struck a preliminary chord, he fainted dead away.

Mr. Reed relieved him of his position at once. In discharging him, he said: "You are the most nervous man I have ever seen." It was not all nervousness, however, Mansfield had not eaten for three days. He had fainted from hunger.

It was many a year before he again worked up to the munificence of eight pounds a week, but this pathetic incident was later made an asset as employed by him in an attractive little comedy of his own writing.

The night of his disastrous début he dragged himself home to his lodgings discouraged and

disconsolate, alone, ill, and penniless; but the cup of his bitterness overflowed the next morning. The American mail brought him a letter which was the sequel of a scene which must be recited here.

One day Madame Rudersdorff [his mother] stormed into George Munzig's studio. In her outstretched hand she carried the fluttering sheets of Richard's latest letter. She was superbly dramatic in her wrath and paced the long room with the air of a tragedy queen.

"George Munzig," she exclaimed in tones of trenchant irony, "do you know what your friend is doing in London—your friend Dick Mansfield? He is giving entertainments; he is an entertainer! He accepts week-end invitations from school-friends like Lady Cardigan's son and others, and plays and sings for them, and takes five pounds for it! Your friend does this. He's no son of mine! I'm going right down to State Street and cut off every penny of his allowance!"

And she did, and wrote him punctually to that effect, "beginning," as he afterward declared, "in very plain English and emphasizing her resentment in French, German, and Italian, and ending up in Russian, with a reserve of bitter denunciation, but no more languages to express it in." She declared that he had "entered on a slave's life," and her son was not fitted for it.

Mansfield was now on evil days indeed. He moved into obscure quarters and fought the hard fight. It was years before he would speak of these experiences. In fact, he rarely ruminated on the past in the confidences of either conversation or correspondence. Memory troubled him little, and by the universal equation it withheld its pleasures. He dwelt in the present with his eyes and hopes on the future. It was always the future with him. No pleasure or attainment brought complete satisfaction. He looked to the past only in relation to the future, for experience, for example, for what to avoid.

Once, when at the meridian of his fame, he was asked to lecture before the faculty and students of the University of Chicago. For his subject he chose, "On Going on the Stage." That he might exploit to those before him the reality of the actor's struggle he lifted for the first time a corner of that veil of mystery which hung between his public and his past, and told of these early London days:

"For years I went home to my little room, if fortunately I had one," he said, "and perhaps a tallow dip was stuck in the neck of a bottle, and I was fortunate if I had something to cook for myself over a fire, if I had a fire. That was my life. When night came I wandered about the streets of London, and if I had a penny I invested

it in a baked potato, from the baked-potato man on the corner. I would put these hot potatoes in my pockets, and after I had warmed my hands I would swallow the potato. That is the truth."

The tragedy of those days was not without its humorous relief. "I can remember one evening in London," he recounted afterward at supper amid the luxury of his Riverside Drive home, "when I reached the pleasant condition of having had nothing to eat all day. I had just one shilling—my last—in my pocket. I was walking along, looking covetously into the pastry shops I passed, wondering how, on my pittance, I could dissipate the carking hunger to the best advantage. Suddenly I came upon a friend of mine, a vagabond like myself, but apparently then in much better luck. He was gorgeously arrayed in all the black-and-white splendor of evening clothes. He had a dinner invitation, he explained, at Lord Cavendish's, or some such great house; we'd go in somewhere and have something on the strength of it.

"We went into one of those Bodega places that are scattered over London, where you get a very decent glass of champagne on draught for sixpence. They always had a large cheese about, you know, from which you may help yourself, which is about the nearest approach England makes to the American free-lunch.

"Well, we tucked into the cheese, at least I

know I did, and we had our glass of champagne each. Now I don't know whether you know it or not, but there is probably not a mixture in the world that is surer to create hunger than cheese and champagne.

"I did not need an appetite, I had a huge one already, but after that cheese and champagne I had a positive gnawing. I was mentally gloating over the shilling's worth of food I would go forth and feast on, when my friend, shuffling his hands nervously from pocket to pocket, turned to me and said:

"'I say, old man, but I'm awfully sorry, but I seem to have left my pocketbook at home. If you happen to have a shilling about you——' And I had the satisfaction of paying out my last shilling for that hunger-raising cheese and champagne!"

The true Mansfield, Mansfield the indomitable, came out in the crucible of these trials. He wrote his mother, but he scorned to ask again for money, well as he understood the fiery temperament which is the expression of impulse. They exchanged most affectionate letters. But he was never to see her again.

The sale of an occasional picture, or the acceptance of a story or poem by a magazine, gave him barely sufficient to eke along. It was with difficulty he was able to put up a respectable appearance when he was so fortunate as

to have an invitation to fashionable houses. But non-nutritive as were the unsubstantials that were exploited there in the form of cold collations, the truth is that had he declined these invitations he would have gone hungry.

His discovery of Mrs. Hall, mother of a group of charming girl friends in Boston, and of his old friends, Mrs. Howe and her daughter Maude, afforded bright spots in this otherwise cheerless period. The dinners to which these ladies invited him were often providential interpositions between him and starvation.

At length his wardrobe became so reduced that attendance at any but the most informal entertainments became out of the question, and finally he had to give up these. Soon he was inking the seams of his coat and wandered about shunning friends for fear they would learn to what a condition he was reduced.

"Often," he admitted, "I stayed in bed and slept because when I was awake I was hungry. Foot-sore I would gaze into the windows of restaurants, bakeries, and fruit-shops, thinking the food displayed in them the most tempting and beautiful sight in the world. There were times when I literally dined on sights and smells."

He did every species of dramatic and musical hack work in drawing-rooms, in clubs, and in special performances in theatres. Sometimes

he got into an obscure provincial company, but he said that his very cleverness was a kind of curse, since the harder he worked and the better the audiences liked him the quicker he was discharged. The established favorites of these little companies always struck when a newcomer made a hit. . . .

In a little sketch called "A Special Delivery Letter," he was intrusted with the part of the Squire who was to receive the letter—or, rather, who was to call for it and not get it because the villain had stolen it. His only line was "*I am surprised,*" and then he was to go off the stage. The manager explained that they could not pay much for one line, yet they couldn't get a super who could look like a country gentleman. Mansfield's pride was touched. He had to prove he was better than a super, and took the part with the proviso that he be allowed to work it up in his own manner, though he warned the manager that he would not be able to give satisfaction.

Once he got on the stage he bade fair never to leave it. When he was assured that there was no letter he improvised a comic scene of anger, resentment, and bluster which sent the audience into paroxysms of laughter. He delivered a tirade on every one in sight. His brother, who was a member of Parliament, would look into the special delivery depart-

ment, his wife's cousin was a peer and the House of Lords would pass a measure abolishing the whole post-office system! Every other sentence was punctuated with "*I am surprised!*" The stage-manager shouted to him to come off, and threw himself into a sweat threatening violence, but Mansfield finished his part as he had written it. That night he was discharged.

But nothing else he did equalled Mansfield's recital of his experience the night he condescended to the plebeian rôle of a waiter and wore an apron. His whole "business" was to draw a cork, but he took pains to drive that cork home before coming on the stage. When his cue came to draw the cork he tugged and tugged in vain. His face drew scarlet and perspiration dropped from his forehead. Then he handed the bottle to another waiter who struggled with all his strength without budging the cork. Mansfield turned a deaf ear to the voices in the wings shouting for him to leave the stage. He took the bottle back again and with renewed effort finally dislodged the cork. The insignificant pop it gave after those Titanic efforts again brought down the house. His hit meant his dismissal as usual.

In 1878 Gilbert and Sullivan made their first great hit with their delightful operatic satire on the British navy, "*H. M. S. Pinafore.*"

Gilbert had for a decade been a popular dramatist. They had been collaborating, too, in several previous efforts, but this was their first triumph. In the autumn D'Oyly Carte planned a second and a third company to play "Pinafore" in the provinces. Having succeeded in no other direction, Mansfield went to his office and registered. One day, after much patience, he was granted an interview with the mighty Gilbert.

He was asked to sing and, turning to the pianist—who happened to be Alfred Cellier—Mansfield said, "Play 'La ci darem.'"

"You don't mean the duet from 'Don Giovanni'?" exclaimed the astonished Cellier.

"Play, play," repeated Mansfield imperatively. He was somewhat impatient, for instead of buying breakfast that morning he had put a boutonnière in his lapel.

When he finished the duet, alternating his deep, full baritone with his wonderful falsetto tones, he was given the rôle of Sir Joseph Porter, K. C. B., First Lord of the Admiralty. It is a part requiring distinction of manner, a good voice, perfect enunciation, and agility in dancing. Mansfield had all of these, and his success in the part was very considerable, although none but the second-class towns were visited by the company of which he was a member. . . .

Augustus van Biene, the actor and musician, whose performance of "The Broken Melody" afterward in England rivalled in length of days and popularity "The Old Homestead" in America, was the musical director for a time. When he heard of Mansfield's later triumphs he exclaimed: "What dreams of success we dreamed! What castles in the air we projected even then! Some day we should astonish the world! And our joint salaries were just thirty-five dollars a week!"

Richard Barker was the stage-manager, and Mansfield could never please him. After trying again and again, he once cried: "'Please, Barker, do let me alone. I shall be all right. I have acted the part.' 'Not you,' declared Barker. 'Act? You act, man? You will never act as long as you live!'"

Mansfield, writing some years after for some young people who were allured by their impressions of the actor's life, referred to these provincial experiences: "Have you any idea of what a dressing-room is like? In what places we sometimes have to dress. I have stood in Wales in the act of making-up—the technical term for painting your face—standing with one foot on a brick, and with the other foot on a brick, and the water running all about me; with a little piece of cracked looking-glass in my hand; and the stage was made out of a number

of boards laid across barrels; with the ladies dressing on one side of the stage and the gentlemen on the other side, and consequently the exits and the entrances had to be changed. We had two exits, one on one side where the gentlemen dressed, and one exit on the side where the ladies dressed, but occasionally we forgot and once I 'exited,' if I may be permitted to use the term, on the side where the ladies dressed, and there were shrieks which were not written by the author of the play."

In America a comedian who could successfully carry the leading rôle in a touring comic opera would command and receive from one to two hundred dollars a week. For upward of a year Mansfield's weekly salary for playing Sir Joseph Porter was three pounds.

His own account of his revolt for an additional six shillings a week in the fall of 1879 and of what followed, written down in his own terms at the time of his telling, lacks only the spirit and magnetism of his recital:

"The management of that company was most exacting. For the slightest excuse, or none at all, salaries were cut, fines were imposed, or the victim discharged with short shrift. Before long I felt the halter draw, and, not yielding promptly to unjust demands, coupled with a request for a raise of six shillings in salary after a year's successful service, I was promptly set

adrift with scarcely a shilling in my pocket. On the munificent salary of three pounds a week it was impossible to lay by anything, and so I journeyed to London with nothing in my pocket but a little contribution which a kind woman of the company forced on me just as I was leaving on my forlorn trip back to the metropolis. Several years ago I found this generous soul in destitute circumstances, over in London, and had the inexpressible pleasure of adding a little to her comfort.

“Reaching my poor lodgings in London, I soon fell into desperate straits. Without money or friends, and with no professional opening, I was soon forced to pawn my few belongings to pay for food. I did not know which way to turn, and was in such extremity that the most gloomy reflections overwhelmed me and I could see no hope in life.”

The recollection of the rebuffs, poverty, starvation, inability to find sympathy, because possibly of the pride which repelled it, the ill-fortune which snatched the extended opportunity just as he was about to grasp it, the jealousy of established favorites of the encroaching popularity of newcomers, the hardships of provincial travel and life in a part of the country and at a time when the play-actor was still regarded as a kind of vagabond, and was paid as such, the severity of the discipline he encountered from the despots

over him—all painted pictures on his memory and fed a fire under the furnace of his nature which tempered the steel in his composition to inflexibility. The stern rod of discipline was held over him every moment and often fell with unforgettable severity. He was trained by autocrats in a school of experience more autocratic than anything known to the younger actors of this generation. . . .

When the part of Chevrial was given to him, Mansfield was fascinated with his opportunity, but he kept his counsel. He applied every resource of his ability to the composition of his performance of the decrepit old rake. He sought specialists on the infirmities of roués, he studied specimens in clubs, on the avenue, and in hospitals; and in the privacy of his own room he practiced make-ups for the part every spare moment. The rehearsals themselves were sufficiently uneventful. He gave evidence of a careful, workmanlike performance, but promises of nothing more.

While he was working out the part Mansfield scarcely ate or slept. He had a habit of dining with a group of young Bohemians at a table d'hôte in Sixth Avenue. The means of none of them made regularity at these forty-cent banquets possible, so his absence was meaningless. One evening, however, he dropped into his accustomed chair, but tasted nothing.

"What's the matter, Mansfield?" asked one of the others.

"To-morrow night I shall be famous," he said. "Come see the play."

His friends were accustomed to lofty talk from him. His prophecy was answered with a light laugh and it had passed out of their memories as they drifted into the night. This was one of those intuitions to which he often confessed, and it told him that the years of apprenticeship were behind him and the artist in him was on the eve of acknowledgment. . . .

On the night of January 11, 1883, the theatre was radiant with an expectant audience—half convinced in advance by the record of the Union Square's past, but by the same token exacting to a merciless degree—to see their old friends in the first performance in America of "A Parisian Romance."

Mansfield made his entrance as the Baron Chevrial within a few moments after the rise of the curtain. It was affected in an unconcerned silence on the part of the audience.

There were, on the other hand, the deserved "receptions" of old favorites by old friends, as Miss Jewett, Miss Vernon, Miss Carey, Mr. DeBelleville, Mr. Parselle, and Mr. Whiting came upon the scene.

When Chevrial, finding himself alone with Tirandel and Laubanière, exposed his amusingly

cynical views of life and society, some attention was paid to a remarkable portrait of a polished but coarse, gay though aging voluptuary. The scene was short and he was soon off, though not without a little impudent touch, in passing the maid in the doorway, that did not slip unnoticed. The dramatic disclosures which followed brought the act to a close with applause that augured well. Henri, Marcelle, and Mme. De Targy were called forward enthusiastically.

The second act revealed the Baron's chambers. With the exception of two minutes he was on the stage until the curtain fell. The Baron's effort, so precisely detailed, to reach and raise the dumb-bells from the floor; the inveterate libertine's interview with shrewd Rosa the *danseuse*, who took the tips he expected would impoverish her and thus put her in his power, for the purpose of playing them the other way, the biting deliberation of his interview with his good Baroness and Henri who comes to ruin himself to save his family's honor—all held the audience with a new sensation. As they pushed his palsied arms into his coat and he pulled himself fairly off his feeble feet in his effort to button it, turned up to his door humming like a preying bumble-bee, faced slowly about again, his piercing little pink eyes darting with anticipation, and off the trembling old lips droned the telling speech: "I wonder

how his pretty little wife will bear poverty? H'm! We shall see"—the curtain fell to applause which was for the newcomer alone. He had interested the audience and was talked about between the acts.

Mr. Palmer rushed back to his dressing-room and found him studiously adding new touches to his make-up for the next act. "Young man," exclaimed the manager, "do you know you're making a hit!" "That's what I'm paid for," replied Mansfield without lowering the rabbit's foot.

The third act was largely Marcelle's. The Baron was on for an episodic interval, but succeeded in that he did not destroy the impression already created.

The fourth act revealed a magnificent banquet hall with a huge table laden with crystal, silver, snowy linens, flowers, and lights. At the top of a short stairway at the back was a gallery and an arched window through which one looked up the green aisle of the Champs-Élysée to the Arc de Triomphe, dimly visible in the moonlight. The Baron entered for one last glance over the preparations for his *petit souper* for Rosa and her sisters of the ballet at the Opéra.

The effectiveness of his entrance was helped by his appearance behind a colonnade, and there he stood only half revealed, swaying unsteadily

while his palsied hand adjusted his monocle to survey the scene. There was a flutter of applause from the audience but, appreciatively, it quickly hushed itself. He dragged himself forward. The cosmetic could not hide the growing pallor of the parchment drawn over the old reprobate's skull. He crept around the table and, with a marvellous piece of "business," by which he held his wobbly legs while he slowly swung a chair under him, collapsed. The picture was terrible but fascinating. People who would could not turn their heads. His valet was quick with water and held the glass in place on the salver while he directed it to the groping arm. The crystal clinked on Chevrial's teeth as he sucked the water.

Presently he found his legs again and tottered up to the staircase. The picture of the black, shrivelled little man dragging his lifeless legs up to the gallery step by step was never forgotten by any one who saw it. At the top he turned and said in thrillingly ominous tones: "I do not wish to be disturbed in the morning. I shall need a long sleep"; and dragged himself out of sight. He had been on the stage five minutes and had said scarcely fifty words. The picture and the effect were unmistakable. The audience capitulated. There was a roar of applause which lasted several minutes.

The whispered discussion of this scene was

such that scarcely any attention was paid to the stage until the Baron returned. Almost immediately afterward the ballet girls pirouetted into the hall in a flutter of gauze, and the places at the table were filled. No one listened to the lines, all eyes in the house were focussed on the withered, shrunken, flaccid little old Baron who sat at Rosa's right, ignored by every one about him as they gorged on his food and drank his wines.

Soon he drew himself up on his feet and raising his glass said, "Here's to the god from whom our pleasures come. Here's to Plutus and a million!"

The gay throng about the table echoed the toast: "To Plutus and a million!" and Chevrial continued:

"While I am up I will give a second toast. Here's to Rosa! The most splendid incarnation that I know!"

Placing the glass to her lips for a first sip the lecherous old pagan's own lips sought the spot, sipped, and he sank back into his chair.

What else went on till he rose again no one knew or minded. No eye in the house could wander from the haggard, evil, smiling, but sinister old face. Presently he was up once more and, with his raised goblet brimming with champagne, he offered a third toast:

"Here's to material Nature, the prolific

mother of all we know, see, or hear. Here's to the matter that sparkles in our glasses, and runs through our veins as a river of youth; here's to the matter that our eyes caress as they dwell on the bloom of those young cheeks. Here's to the matter that—here's to—here's—the matter—the matter that—here's——”

The attack had seized him. Terrible and unforgettable was the picture of the dissolution. The lips twitched, the eyes rolled white, the raised hand trembled, the wine sputtered like the broken syllables which the shattered memory would not send and the swollen tongue suddenly could not utter. For one moment of writhing agony he held the trembling glass aloft, then his arm dropped with a swiftness that shattered the crystal. Instinctively he groped up to the stairs for light and air. He reeled as if every step would be his last. Rosa helped him up to the window, but recoiled from him with a shriek. Again his hand flew up, but there was neither glass, wine, nor words. He rolled helplessly and fell to the floor, dead. The curtain fell.

It was probably the most realistically detailed figure of refined moral and physical depravity, searched to its inevitable end, the stage had ever seen. For a moment after the curtain fell there was a hush of awe and surprise. Then the audience found itself and called

Mansfield to the footlights a dozen times. But neither then nor thereafter would he appear until he had removed the wig and make-up of the dead Baron. There was no occasion to change his clothes; he wore the conventional evening suit. The effect of shrivelled undersizedness was purely a muscular effect of the actor. The contrast between the figure that fell at the head of the stairs and the athletic young gentleman who acknowledged the applause was no anticlimax.

Mansfield had come into his own. The superb art of his performance had dwarfed all about it; the play was killed, but he was from that moment a figure to be reckoned with in the history of the theatre.

Next day the papers acclaimed him, but with the studied conservatism which can scarce believe what it has seen; with the understanding which is not sure of itself, and hence fears to betray itself.

In the audience, however, was old Maurice Strakosch, who knew the artists of both hemispheres. He fairly ran across to Irving Place and up to a house full of musical celebrities, several pupils and friends of Madame Rudersdorff, Bohemians who dared offer welcome to a midnight caller. Emma Thursby was among them, and she tells how the great man, crimson with enthusiasm, trembled with his agitation

as he called every one about him to give his criticism of the event, in the broad, sweeping, affectionate terms of one who knew whereof he spoke and really knew that he knew:

"I have to-night witnessed a wonderful event. I have been to see 'A Parisian Romance.' The actor who played the Baron Chevrial was unknown till to-night. To-morrow he will be famous. My friends, it is the birth of a great career, the coming of a great artist! A *great* artist! And do you know who he is? He is Richie, our Richie, Richie Mansfield!"

Next morning Mansfield woke up to find himself indeed famous.

END OF VOLUME VI

N. J.
J. W.

